ST. LEON:

A

TALE

OF THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude.

CONGREVE.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR P. WOGAN, G. BURNET, P. BYRNE, W. PORTER, W. JONES, J. RICE, N. KELLY, G. FOLINGSBY, R. E. MERCIER, AND J. STOCKDALE.

1800.

Ἀναγνωσθη

R. T.

PREFACE.

THE following paſſage from a work, ſaid to be written by the late Dr. John Campbel, and entitled *Hermippus Redivivus*, ſuggeſted the firſt hint of the preſent performance.

"There happened in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great ſtir then, and which I think deſerves to be reſcued from oblivion. The great freedom and eaſe with which all perſons who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known ſufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; ſuch therefore will not be ſurpriſed, that a ſtranger, who went by the name of ſignor Gualdi, and who made a conſiderable figure there, was admitted

mitted into the beſt company, though no body knew who or what he was. He remained at Venice ſome months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The firſt was, that he had a ſmall collection of fine pictures, which he readily ſhewed to any body that deſired it; the next that he was perfectly verſed in all arts and ſciences, and ſpoke on every ſubject with ſuch readineſs and ſagacity, as aſtoniſhed all who heard him; and it was in the third place obſerved, that he never wrote or received any letter; never deſired any credit, or made uſe of bills of exchange, but paid for every thing in ready money, and lived decently, though not in ſplendour.

"This gentleman met one day at the coffee-houſe with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good judge of pictures: he had heard of

ſignor

ſignor Gualdi's collection, and in a very polite manner deſired to ſee them, to which the other very readily conſented. After the Venetian had viewed ſignor Gualdi's collection, and expreſſed his ſatisfaction, by telling him, that he had never ſeen a finer, conſidering the number of pieces of which it conſiſted; he caſt his eye by chance over the chamber-door, where hung a picture of this ſtranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn for you, ſir, ſays he to ſignor Gualdi, to which the other made no anſwer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this poſſible? It is not eaſy, ſaid

ſignor

ſignor Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are poſſible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian eaſily perceived by his manner of ſpeaking, that he had given the ſtranger offence, and therefore took his leave.

"He could not forbear ſpeaking of this in the evening to ſome of his friends, who reſolved to ſatisfy themſelves by looking upon the picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing ſo, they went to the coffee-houſe about the time that ſignor Gualdi was wont to come thither, and not meeting with him, one of them who had often converſed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard, that he had ſet out an hour before for Vienna. This affair made

made a great noiſe, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time."*

It is well known that the philoſopher's ſtone, the art of tranſmuting metals into gold; and the *elixir vitæ*, which was to reſtore youth, and make him that poſſeſſed it immortal, formed a principal object of the ſtudies of the curious for centuries. Many ſtories, beſide this of ſignor Gualdi, have been told, of perſons who were ſuppoſed to be in poſſeſſion of thoſe wonderful ſecrets, in the ſearch of which hundreds of unfortunate adventurers waſted their fortunes and their lives.

It

* To this ſtory, in the book from which I have quoted it, is ſubjoined the following reference, "*Memoires hiſtoriques*, 1687, tom. i. p. 365." Being deſirous of giving my extract from the eldeſt authority, I cauſed the Britiſh Muſeum, and the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge to be ſearched for this publication, but in vain. The ſtory and the reference are, not improbably, both of them the fictions of the Engliſh writer.

It has been ſaid of Shakeſpear, that he

Exhauſted worlds, and then imagined new;*

but the burthen ſuſtained by Shakeſpear was too heavy for the ſhoulders of any other individual. I leave the firſt part of the taſk above mentioned to be divided among thoſe celebrated noveliſts, living and dead, who have attempted to delineate the ſcenes of real life. In this little work I have endeavoured to gain footing in one neglected track of the latter province. The hearts and the curioſity of readers have been aſſailed in ſo many ways, that we, writers who bring up the rear of our illuſtrious predeceſſors, muſt be contented to arrive at novelty in whatever mode we are able. The founda-

tion

* Johnſon's occaſional Prologue on Garrick's aſſuming the management of Drury-lane Theatre.

tion of the following tale is ſuch as, it is not to be ſuppoſed, ever exiſted. But, if I have mixed human feelings and paſſions with incredible ſituations, and thus rendered them impreſſive and intereſting, I ſhall entertain ſome hope to be pardoned the boldneſs and irregularity of my deſign.

Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in peruſing theſe little volumes, accuſe me of inconſiſtency; the affections and charities of private life being every where in this publication a topic of the warmeſt eulogium, while in the Enquiry concerning Political Juſtice they ſeemed to be treated with no indulgence and favour. In anſwer to this objection all I think it neceſſary to ſay on the preſent occaſion, is that, for more than four years I have been anxious for oppor-

tunity and leiſure to modify ſome of the earlier chapters of that work in conformity to the ſentiments inculcated in this. Not that I ſee cauſe to make any change reſpecting the principle of juſtice, or any thing elſe fundamental to the ſyſtem there delivered; but that I apprehend domeſtic and private affections inſeparable from the nature of man, and from what may be ſtyled the culture of the heart, and am fully perſuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active ſenſe of juſtice in the mind of him that cheriſhes them. The way in which theſe ſeemingly jarring principles may be reconciled, is in part pointed out in a little book which I gave to the public in the year 1798, and which I will here therefore take the liberty to quote. "A ſound

"A ſound morality requires that "nothing human ſhould be regard-"ed by us as indifferent;" but it is impoſſible we ſhould not feel the ſtrongeſt intereſt for thoſe perſons whom we know moſt intimately, and whoſe welfare and ſympathies are united to our own. True wiſdom will recommend to us individual attachments; for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them, and it is better that man ſhould be a living being, than a ſtock or a ſtone. True virtue will ſanction this recommendation; ſince it is the object of virtue to produce happineſs, and ſince the man who lives in the midſt of domeſtic relations, will have many opportunities of conferring pleaſure, minute in the detail, yet not trivial

in

in the amount, without interfering with the purpoſes of general benevolence. Nay, by kindling his ſenſibility, and harmoniſing his ſoul, they may be expected, if he is endowed with a liberal and manly ſpirit, to render him more prompt in the ſervice of ſtrangers and the public." Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Ch. VI, p. 90. IId. Edition.

* * For the ſake of the unlearned reader, I ſubjoin the following illuſtration of the motto prefixed to theſe volumes.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was a Portugueſe, born about the year 1510. Becoming a fugitive from his country at a very immature age, he travelled through many parts of Africa and Aſia for twenty-one years, and, by his own account, encountered a ſurpriſing number of diſtreſsful adventures. The tranſlation of his travels into French forms a very thick volume in quarto, and bears date in the year 1628.

Viciſſitudes de la Fortune, 12mo,

Tom. I, p. 1.

Nov. 26, 1799.

The Engliſh Tranſlation of Pinto's Travels is a thin folio, and is a very rare book.

TRAVELS

OF

ST. LEON.

CHAP. I.

THERE is nothing that human imagination can figure of brilliant and enviable, that human genius and ſkill do not aſpire to realize. In the early ages of antiquity, one of the favourable topics of ſpeculations was a perfect ſyſtem of civil policy; and no ſooner had Plato delineated his imaginary republic, than he ſought for a ſpot of earth upon which to execute his plan. In my own times, and for upwards of a century before them, the ſubject which has chiefly occupied men of intrepid and perſevering ſtudy, has been the great ſecret of nature, the *opus magnum*, in its two grand and inſeparable branches, the art of multiplying gold, and of defying the aſſaults of infirmity and death.

It is notorious that uncommon talents and unparalleled induſtry have been engaged in this mighty taſk. It has, I know, been diſputed by the audacious adverſaries of all ſober and reaſonable evidence, whether theſe talents and induſtry have in any caſe attained the object they ſought. It is not to my purpoſe to aſcertain the number of thoſe

whoſe

whoſe victory over the powers and inertneſs of matter has been complete. It is enough that I am a living inſtance of the exiſtence of ſuch men. Theſe two ſecrets, if they are to be conſidered as two, I have been for years in the habit of reſorting to for my gratification. I have in my poſſeſſion the choice of being as wealthy as I pleaſe, and the gift of immortal life. Every thing that I ſee almoſt, I can without difficulty make my own; for what palaces, pictures, parks or gardens, rarities of art or nature, have not a price at which their owner will conſent to yield them? The luxuries of every quarter of the world are emptied at my feet. I can command, to an extent almoſt inconceivable, the paſſions of men. What heart can withſtand the aſſault of princely magnificence? What man is inacceſſible to a bribe? Add to theſe advantages, that I am invulnerable to diſeaſe. Every ſun that riſes, finds the circulations of my frame in the moſt perfect order. Decrepitude can never approach me. A thouſand winters want the power to furrow my countenance with wrinkles, or turn my hairs to ſilver. Exhauſtleſs wealth and eternal youth, theſe are the attributes by which I am diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of mankind.

I do not ſit down now to write a treatiſe of natural philoſophy. The condition by which I hold my privileges is, that they muſt never be imparted. I ſit down purely to relate a few of thoſe extraordinary events that have been produced in the period of my life which is already elapſed, by the circumſtances and the peculiarity to which I have juſt alluded.

It is ſo obvious, as to make it almoſt improper to ſpecify it, that the purſuit in which ſo many of my cotemporaries are engaged, and the end of which I have ſo ſingularly atchieved, is in its appearance infinitely more grand and intereſting, than

than that which occupied the thoughts of Plato and the moſt eminent writers of antiquity. What is political liberty, compared with unbounded riches and immortal vigour? The immediate application of political liberty is, to render a man's patrimony or the fruits of his induſtry completely his own, and to preſerve them from the invaſion of others. But the petty detail of preſervation or gradual acquiſition, can never enter into competition with the *great ſecret*, which can endow a man in a moment with every thing that the human heart can wiſh. Conſidered in this light, how mean and contemptible does the ambition of the boaſted ancients appear, compared with ours? What adept or probationer of the preſent day would be content to reſign the ſtudy of God and the profounder ſecrets of nature, and to bound his ardour to the inveſtigation of his own miſerable exiſtence?

It may ſeem perhaps to many, that the hiſtory of a perſon poſſeſſed of advantages ſo unparalleled as mine, muſt be like the hiſtory of paradiſe, or of the future happineſs of the bleſſed, too calm, and motionleſs, too much of one invariable texture and exempt from viciſſitude, to excite the attention or intereſt the paſſions of the reader. If he will have patience, and apply to the peruſal of my narrative, he will in no long time perceive how far his conjecture is founded in ſagacity and reaſon.

Some perſons may be curious to know what motives can have induced a man of ſuch enormous wealth, and ſo every way qualified to revel in delights, to take the trouble of penning his memoirs. The immortality with which I am endowed ſeems to put out of the queſtion the common motives that relate to poſthumous fame.

The curioſity here mentioned, if it really exiſts, I cannot conſent to gratify. I will anticipate nothing

nothing. In the progreſs of my ſtory, my motive for recording it will probably become evident.

I am deſcended from one of the moſt ancient and honourable families of the kingdom of France. I was the only child of my father, who died while I was an infant. My mother was a woman of rather a maſculine underſtanding, and full of the prejudices of nobility and magnificence. Her whole ſoul was in a manner concentrated in the ambition to render me the worthy ſucceſſor of the counts de St. Leon, who had figured with diſtinguiſhed reputation in the wars of the Holy Land. My father had died fighting gallantly in the plains of Italy under the ſtandard of Louis the Twelfth; a prince whoſe name was never repeated to me, unaccompanied with the praiſes due to his military proweſs, and to the ſingular humanity of diſpoſition by which he acquired the title of *The father of his people*. My mother's mind was inflamed with the greatneſs of my anceſtors, and ſhe indefatigably ſought to kindle in my boſom a ſimilar flame. It has been a long-eſtabliſhed cuſtom for the barons and feudal vaſſals of the kings of France to enter with great perſonal expence into the brilliant and dazzling expeditions of their ſovereigns; and my father greatly impaired his fortune in preparations for that very campaign in which he terminated his life. My mother induſtriouſly applied herſelf to the reſtoration of my patrimony; and the long period of my minority afforded her ſcope for that purpoſe.

It was impoſſible for any boy to be treated with more kindneſs and conſiderate indulgence, than I was during the period of my adoleſcence. My mother loved me to the very utmoſt limits perhaps of human affection. I was her darling and her pride, her waking ſtudy, and her nightly dream. Yet I was not pampered into corporeal imbecillity,

imbecillity, or ſuffered to ruſt in inactivity of mind. I was provided with the beſt maſters. I was excited, and ſucceſsfully excited, zealouſly to apply myſelf to the leſſons they taught. I became intimately acquainted with the Italian writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I was initiated in the ſtudy of the claſſics, to the cultivation of which the revival of letters at this time gave particular ardour. I was inſtructed in the principles of the fine arts. There was no ſpecies of accompliſhment at that time in vogue, that my mother was not anxious I ſhould make my own. The only ſcience I neglected, was the very ſcience which has ſince given riſe to the moſt extraordinary events of my life. But the object to which my attention was principally called, was the purſuit of military exerciſes, and the cultivation of every thing that could add to the ſtrength, agility or grace of my body, and to the adventurouſneſs and enterprize of my mind. My mother loved my honour and my fame more than ſhe loved my perſon.

A circumſtance that tended perhaps more than any other to fix the yet fluctuating character of my youthful mind, was my being preſent as a ſpectator at the celebrated meeting between Francis the Firſt, and Henry the Eighth, king of England, in a field between Ardres and Guines. My mother refuſed to accompany me, being already arrived at an age in which curioſity and the love of feſtive ſcenes are uſually diminiſhed, and the expences incurred by all the nobility who attended upon this ſcene being incompatible with the economy to which ſhe rigidly adhered. I was therefore placed under the protection of the marquis de Villeroy, her brother, and, with two ſervants who attended me, formed a part of his ſuite.

I was at this time fifteen years of age. My contemplations had been familiar with ideas of magni-

ficence

ficence and grandeur, but my life had been ſpent in the moſt ſequeſtered retirement. This contraſt had a particular effect upon my diſpoſition; it irritated to a very high degree my paſſion for ſplendour and diſtinction; I lived in the fairy fields of viſionary greatneſs, and was more than indifferent to the greater part of the objects around me. I pined for every thing the reverſe of my preſent condition; I cultivated the exerciſes in which I was engaged, only as they were calculated to prepare me for future atchievements.

By the incident I have mentioned, I was tranſported at once from a ſcene of modeſt obſcurity, to a ſcene of the moſt laviſh ſplendour that the world perhaps ever contemplated. I never remembered to have ſeen even Paris itſelf. The prevailing taſte of Europe has for ſome time led very much to coſtlineſs in dreſs. This taſte, in its preſent profuſion, I believe took its riſe in the field of the Vale of Ardres. The two kings were both in the vigour of their youth, and were ſaid to be the handſomeſt men of the age in which they lived. The beauty of Henry was ſturdy and muſcular; that of Francis more refined and elegant, without ſubtracting in any conſiderable degree from the firmneſs of his make. Henry was four years older than his brother monarch. The firſt of them might have been taken as a model to repreſent a youthful Hercules, and the laſt an Apollo.

The ſplendour of dreſs that was worn upon this occaſion, exceeds almoſt all credibility. Every perſon of diſtinction might be ſaid in a manner to carry an eſtate upon his ſhoulders; nor was the variety of garments inferior to the richneſs. Wolſey, a man whoſe magnificence of diſpoſition was only ſurpaſſed by the pride of his ſoul, was for the moſt part the director of the whole. He poſſeſſed the moſt abſolute aſcendancy over the mind of his maſter,

ter, at the ſame time that Francis artfully indulged his caprice, that he might claim from him in return a ſimilar indulgence in weightier matters.

The pomp of proceſſions, and the ceremony of opening this memorable feſtival, went firſt; a ſort of ſolemn and half-moving pageant, which the eye took in at leiſure, and took in till it was filled. This was ſucceeded by every thing that was rapid, animated and intereſting: maſques and exhibitions of all kinds; and, which was ſtill more to me, and which my ſoul devoured with indeſcribable ardour, juſtings, tilts and tournaments without end. The beauty of the armour, the capariſons of the ſteeds, the mettle of the animals themſelves, and the ardour and grace of the combatants, ſurpaſſed every thing that my fancy had ever painted. Theſe ſcenes were acted in the midſt of a vaſt amphitheatre of ſpectators, where all that was noble and eminent of either country was aſſembled, the manlineſs of aſpiring youth, and the boundleſs varieties of female attraction. All were in their gayeſt attire; every eye was lighted up with complacency and joy. If Heraclitus, or any other moroſe philoſopher who has expatiated on the univerſal miſery of mankind, had entered the field of Ardres, he muſt have retracted his aſſertions, or fled from the ſcene with confuſion. The kings were placed at either end of the liſts, ſurrounded with their courtiers. Every eye through this vaſt aſſembly was fixed upon the combatants; the body of every one preſent was inclined this way or that, in unconſcious ſympathy with the redoubted knights. From time to time, as the favourites of either party prevailed, the air was rent with ſhouts and acclamations.

What added to the faſcination of all that I have yet mentioned, was that now, for the firſt time in an equal degree perhaps for centuries, the ſtiffneſs of unwieldy form was laid aſide, and the heart of man

man expanded itself with generosity and confidence. It burst the fetters of ages; and having burst them, it seemed to revel in its new-found liberty. It is well known that, after a few days of idle precaution and specious imprisonment on both sides, Francis one morning mounted his horse, and appeared, without guards or any previous notice, before the tent of Henry. The example was contagious, and from this time all ceremony was laid aside. The kings themselves entered personally into the combats of their subjects. It was a delightful and a ravishing spectacle, to witness all the freedom of the old Roman manners, almost of the old Roman Saturnalia, polished and refined with all that was graceful and humane in the age of chivalry.

It may easily be imagined what an effect a scene like this was calculated to produce upon a youth of my age and my education. I recollected with anguish that the immaturity of my years precluded me from taking any active part in the spectacle. My appearance however was sufficiently advantageous. I was presented to Francis the First. He did me the honour to question me respecting my studies; and, finding in me some knowledge of those arts and that literature of which he was himself so zealous a favourer, he expressed to my uncle a great satisfaction with my figure and acquisitions. I might from this time have been taken to court, and made one of the pages of this illustrious monarch. But the plan of my mother was different. She did not wish for the present that my eye should be satiated with public scenes, or that the public should grow too familiarly acquainted with my person. She rightly judged that my passion for the theatre of glory would grow more impetuous, by being withheld for some time from the gratifications for which it panted. She wished that I

ſhould preſent myſelf for the firſt time among the nobility of France an accompliſhed cavalier, and not ſuffer the diſadvantage of having expoſed in the eye of the world thoſe falſe ſteps and frailties, from which the inexperience of youth is never entirely free. Theſe motives being explained to the king, he was graciouſly pleaſed to ſanction them with his approbation. I accordingly returned to finiſh the courſe of my education at my paternal chateau upon the banks of the Garonne.

The ſtate of my mind during the three ſucceeding years, amply juſtified the ſagacity of my mother. I was more eager for improvement than I had ever yet been. I had before formed ſome conceptions of the career of honour, from the books I had read, and from the converſation of this excellent matron. But my reveries were impotent and little, compared with what I had now ſeen. Like the author of our holy religion, I had ſpent my forty days without food in the wilderneſs, when ſuddenly my eyes were opened, and I was preſented with all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. The fairy ſcene continued for a moment, and then vaniſhed; leaving nothing behind it on all ſides but the ſame barrenneſs and gloom by which it had been preceded. I never ſhut my eyes without viewing in imagination the combats of knights and the train of ladies. I had been regarded with diſtinction by my ſovereign; and Francis the Firſt ſtood before my mind the abſtract and model of perfection and greatneſs. I congratulated myſelf upon being born in an age and country ſo favourable to the acquiſition of all that my ſoul deſired.

I was already eighteen years of age, when I experienced the firſt misfortune that ever befel me. It was the death of my mother. She felt the approach of her diſſolution ſeveral weeks before it arrived,

arrived, and held repeated converſations with me, reſpecting the feelings I ought to entertain, and the conduct it would become me to purſue, when ſhe ſhould be no more.

"My ſon," ſaid ſhe, "your character, and the promiſe of your early years, have conſtituted my only conſolation ſince the death of your excellent father. Our marriage was the reſult of a moſt ſincere and excluſive attachment, and never did man more deſerve to be loved than Reginald de St. Leon. When he died, the whole world would have been nothing to me but one vaſt blank, if he had not left behind him the repreſentative of his perſon, and the heir to his virtues. While I was buſied in your education, I ſeemed to be diſcharging the laſt duty to the memory of my huſband. The occupation was ſacred to the honour of the dead, even before it became ſo peculiarly pleaſing to me upon its own account as I afterwards found it. I hope I have in ſome meaſure diſcharged thy taſk in the manner in which my lord your father would have wiſhed it to have been diſcharged if he had lived. I am thankful to heaven that I have been ſpared ſo long for ſo dear and honourable a purpoſe.

"You muſt now, my ſon, ſtand by yourſelf, and be the arbitrator of your own actions. I could have wiſhed that this neceſſity might have been a little further deferred; but I truſt your education has not been of that ſort which is calculated to render a young man helpleſs and contemptible. You have been taught to know your rank in ſociety, and to reſpect yourſelf. You have been inſtructed in every thing that might moſt effectually forward you in the career of glory. There is not a young cavalier among all the nobility of France more accompliſhed, or that promiſes to do greater honour to his name and his country. I ſhall not

live

live to witneſs the performance of this promiſe, but the anticipation even now, pours a long ſtream of ſunſhine on my departing hour.

"Farewel, my ſon! You no longer ſtand in need of my maternal care. When I am gone, you will be compelled more vividly to feel that ſingleneſs and ſelf dependence which are the ſource of all virtue. Be careful of yourſelf. Be careful that your carreer may be both ſpotleſs and illuſtrious. Hold your life as a thing of no account when it enters into competition with your fame. A true knight thinks no ſacrifice and ſuffering hard that honour demands. Be humane, gentle, generous and intrepid. Be prompt to follow wherever your duty calls you. Remember your anceſtors, knights of the Holy Croſs. Remember your father. Follow your king, who is the mirror of valour; and be ever ready for the ſervice of the diſtreſſed. May providence be your guardian. May heaven ſhower down a thouſand bleſſings upon your innocence and the gallantry of your ſoul!"

The death of my mother wae a ſevere blow to my heart. For ſome time all the viſions of greatneſs and renown which had hitherto been my choſen delight, appeared diſtaſteful to me. I hung over her inſenſible corpſe. When it had been committed to the earth, I repaired every day to the ſpot where it was depoſited, at the hour of duſk, when all viſible objects faded from the eye, when nature aſſumed her ſaddeſt tints, and the whole world ſeemed about to be wrapped in the darkneſs of the tomb. The dew of night drizzled unheeded on my head; and I did not turn again towards the turrets of the chateau, till the hour of midnight had already ſounded through the ſtilneſs of the ſcene.

Time is the healer of almoſt every grief, particularly in the ſprightly ſeaſon of early youth. In no

no long period I changed the oppreſſion of inactive ſorrow, for the affectionate and pious recollection of my mother's laſt inſtructions. I had been too deeply imbued with ſentiments of glory, for it to be poſſible, when the firſt exceſs of grief was over, that I ſhould remain in indolence. The tender remembrance of my mother itſelf, in no long time, furniſhed a new ſtimulus to my ambition. I forgot the melancholy ſpectacle of the laſt ſtruggles of her expiring life; I even became accuſtomed no longer to hear her voice, no longer to expect her preſence, when I returned to the chateau from a ſhort excurſion. Her laſt advice was now all that ſurvived of the author of my exiſtence.

CHAP. II.

I WAS in this ſtate of mind, when, early one morning in the beginning of ſummer, ſoon after I roſe, I was ſtartled by the ſound of trumpets in the plain near the chateau. The bugle at the gate was preſently ſounded; the drawbridge was let down; and the marquis de Villeroy entered the court-yard, accompanied by about thirty knights in complete armour. I ſaluted him with reſpect, and the tenderneſs excited by recent grief. He took me by the hand, after a ſhort repaſt in the hall, and led me to my cloſet.

"My ſon," ſaid he, "it is time to throw off the effeminacy of ſorrow, and to prove yourſelf a true ſoldier of the ſtandard of France."

"I truſt, my lord," replied I, with modeſt earneſtneſs, "that you well know, there is nothing after which my heart ſo ardently aſpires. There is nothing that I know worth living for, but honour. Show me the path that leads to it, or rather

rather ſhew me the occaſion that affords ſcope for the love of honour to diſplay itſelf, and you ſhall then ſee whether I am backward to embrace it. I have a paſſion pent up within me, that feeds upon my vitals. It diſdains ſpeech; it burns for ſomething more unambiguous and ſubſtantial."

"It is well," rejoined my uncle, "I expect to find you thus. Your reply to my admonition is worthy of the blood of your anceſtors, and of the maternal inſtructions of my ſiſter. And, were you as dull as the very ſtones you tread on, what I have to tell you might even then rouſe you into animation and ardour."

After this ſhort preface my uncle proceeded to relate a tale, every word of which inflamed my ſpirits, and raiſed all my paſſions in arms. I had heard ſomething imperfectly of the ſtate of my country; but my mother carefully kept me in ignorance, that my ambition might not be excited too ſoon, and that, when excited, it might be with the fulleſt effect. While I impatiently longed for an occaſion of glory, I was far from apprehending, what I now found to be true, that the occaſion which at this period preſented itſelf, was ſuch, that all the licence of fiction could ſcarcely have improved it.

The marquis de Villeroy deſcribed to me the league now ſubſiſting againſt France. He revived in my memory by terms of the moſt fervent loyalty, the accompliſhments and talents of my royal maſter. He ſpoke with averſion of the phlegmatic and crafty diſpoſition of his imperial rival*; and, with the language of glowing indignation, inveighed againſt the fickleneſs of the capricious Henry†. He deſcribed the train of diſ-

* Charles V. † Henry VIII.

aſters which had at length induced the king to take the field in perſon. He contraſted, with great effect, the ſtory of the gallant chevalier Bayard, *the knight without fear and without reproach*, whoſe blood was ſtill freſh in the plains of the Milaneſe; with that of the conſtable of Bourbon, the ſtain of chivalry, whom inglorious reſentments and ungoverned ambition had urged to join the enemies of his country, in neglect of his loyalty and his oath. He ſtimulated me by the example of the one, and the infamy of the other; and aſſured me that there never was an opportunity more favourable for acquiring immortal renown.

I wanted no prompter in a paſſion of this ſort; and immediately ſet about collecting the whole force of my clients and retainers. I ſhook off the inglorious ſoftneſs of my melancholy, and was all activity and animation. The leſſons of my youth were now called into play. I judged it neceſſary to invite the aſſiſtance of ſome perſon of experience to aſſiſt me in marſhalling my men; but I did much of what was to be done myſelf, and I did it well. It was my firſt employment in the morning; and the laſt that was witneſſed by the ſetting ſun. My excellent mother had left my revenues in the beſt order, and I ſpared no expence in the gratification of my favourite paſſion.

However eager I felt myſelf to take the field, the deſire to appear in a manner worthy of a count de St. Leon reſtrained me; and I did not join the royal army till the Imperialiſts, having broken up the ſiege of Marſeilles, and retreated with precipitation into Italy, the king had already croſſed the Alps, entered the Milaneſe, and gained unconteſted poſſeſſion of the capital.

From Milan Francis proceeded to Pavia. Glory was the idol of his heart; and he was the more powerfully excited to the attack of that place, becauſe it was the ſtrongeſt and beſt fortified poſt in

in the whole duchy. The more he diſplayed of military proweſs, the more firmly he believed he ſhould fix himſelf in his newly-acquired dominions; the inhabitants would ſubmit to him the more willingly, and the enemy be leſs encouraged to enter into a freſh contention for what he had acquired. Such at leaſt were the motives that he aſſigned for his proceedings: in reality perhaps he was principally induced by the brilliancy which he conceived would attend on the undertaking.

It was a few weeks after the opening of the ſiege that I preſented myſelf to my royal maſter. He received me with thoſe winning and impreſſive manners by which he was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. He recollected immediately all that had paſſed at our interview in the vale of Ardres, and warmly expreſſed the obligations which France had at various times owed to my anceſtors. He ſpoke with earneſt reſpect of the virtues and wiſdom of my mother, and commended the reſolution by which ſhe had in former inſtances held me back from the public theatre. "Young gentleman," ſaid the king, "I doubt not the gallantry of your ſpirit; I ſee the impatience of a martial temper written in your face; I expect you to act in a manner worthy of your illuſtrious race, and of the inſtructions of a woman who deſerved to be herſelf a pattern to all the matrons of France. Fear not that I ſhall ſuffer your accompliſhments to ruſt in obſcurity. I ſhall employ you. I ſhall aſſign you the poſt of danger and of renown. Fill it nobly; and from that hour I ſhall rank you in the catalogue of my choſen friends."

The ſiege of Pavia proved indeed to be a tranſaction, in the courſe of which military honour might well be acquired. It was defended by a ſmall, but veteran garriſon, and by one of the ableſt captains that Europe at that time poſſeſſed*.

* Antonio de Leyva.

He interrupted the approaches of the beſiegers by frequent and furious ſallies. In vain by the aid of our excellent artillery, did we make wide and repeated breaches in the fortifications. No ſooner did we attempt to enter by the paſſage we had opened, than we found ourſelves encountered by a body compoſed of the choiceſt and braveſt ſoldiers of the garriſon. The governor of the city, who, though grey-headed and advanced in years, was profuſe of every youthful exertion, was ordinarily at the head of this body. If we deferred our attack, or, not having ſucceeded in it, propoſed to commence it anew with the dawn of the following day, we were ſure to find a new wall ſprung up in the room of the other, as if by enchantment. Frequently the governor anticipated the ſucceſs of our batteries, and the old fortification was no ſooner demoliſhed, than we beheld to our aſtoniſhment and mortification a new wall, which his prudence and ſkill had erected at a ſmall interval within the line of the former.

One of theſe attacks took place on the ſecond day after my arrival at the camp of our ſovereign. Every thing that I ſaw was new to me, and inflamed me with ardour. The noiſe of the cannon, which had preceded the attack, and which was now huſhed; the inſpiring ſounds of martial muſic which ſucceeded that noiſe; the ſtandards floating in the air; the firm and equal tread of the battalion that advanced; the armour of the knights; the rugged, reſolute and intrepid countenances of the infantry; all ſwelled my ſoul with tranſport hitherto unexperienced. I had beheld the ſmoke of the artillery, in the midſt of which everything was loſt and confounded; I had waited in awful ſuſpence till the obſcurity ſhould be diſſipated; I ſaw with pleaſure and ſurpriſe the ruin of the wall, and the wideneſs of the breach. All

that

that had been recorded of the military feats of Chriſtian valour ſeamed then to ſtand crouded in my buſy brain; the generoſity, the condeſcenſion, the kindneſs with which the king had addreſſed me the day before, urged me to treble exertion. I was in the foremoſt rank. We ſurmounted the ditch. We were reſiſted by a choſen body of Spaniards. The contention was obſtinate; brave men, generous and enterpriſing ſpirits, fell on the one ſide and the other. I ſeized the cloth of a ſtandard, as, in the playing of the wind, it was brought near to my hand. Between me and the Spaniard that held it there enſued an obſtinate ſtruggle. I watched my opportunity, and with my ſword ſevered the flag from its ſtaff. At this moment the trumpets of the king ſounded a retreat. I had received two ſevere wounds, one in the ſhoulder and the other in the thigh, in the conteſt. I felt myſelf faint with the loſs of blood. A French officer of a rude appearance and gigantic ſtature, accoſting me with the appellation of boy, commanded me to ſurrender the ſtandard to him. I refuſed; and, to convince him I was in earneſt, proceeded to wrap it round my body, and faſtened it under my arm. Soon after I became inſenſible, and in this ſituation was accidentally found by my uncle and his companions, who immediately took me and my prize under their care. As ſoon as I was a little recovered of my wounds, the king ſeized an opportunity, after having beſtowed loud commendations upon my gallantry, of conferring the honours of knighthood upon me in the face of the whole army.

While our tents were pitched under the walls of Pavia, I was continually extending the circle of my acquaintance among the young gentry of France, who, like myſelf, had attended their ſovereign in this memorable expedition. I had

ſome

ſome enemies, made ſuch by the diſtinctions I obtained during the ſiege. But they were few; the greater part courted me the more, the more I ſhowed myſelf worthy of their attachment. Envy is not a paſſion that finds eaſy root in a Frenchman's boſom. I was one of the youngeſt of thoſe who attended on the ſiege; but my brothers in arms were generous rivals, who in the field obſtinately ſtrove with me for ſuperior glory, but over the convivial board forgot their mutual competitions, and opened their hearts to benevolence and friendſhip. "Let us not," was a ſentiment I heard often repeated, "forget the object that led us from our pleaſant homes to pour from the heights of the Alps upon the fields of Italy. It is to humble the imperious Spaniard, to puniſh the diſloyal Bourbon, to vindicate the honour of our beloved and illuſtrious monarch. Thoſe walls cover the enemy; yonder mountains ſerve to hide them from our aſſault; let no Frenchman miſtake him who marches under the ſame ſtandard for an adverſary."

The trenches had not been opened before Pavia, till about the beginning of November. The winter overtook us, and the ſiege was yet in progreſs; with ſome apparent advantage indeed to our ſide of the queſtion, but by no means promiſing an inſtant concluſion. The ſeaſon ſet in with unuſual ſeverity; and both officer and ſoldier were glad, as much as poſſible, to fence out its rigour by the indulgences of the genial board. My finances, as I have ſaid, were at the commencement of the expedition in excellent order; I had brought with me a conſiderable ſum; and it was not ſpared upon the preſent occaſion.

There were however other things to be attended to, beſide the demands of conviviality. The king became impatient of the delays of the ſiege. The

The garriſon and the inhabitants were reduced to great extremities; but the governor diſcovered no ſymptoms of a purpoſe to ſurrender. In the mean time intelligence was brought that Bourbon was making the moſt extraordinary exertions in Germany, and promiſed to bring to the enemy a reinforcement of twelve thouſand men from that country, while the imperial generals, by mortgaging their revenues, and pawning their jewels, and ſtill more by their eloquence and influence with thoſe under their command, were able to keep together the remains of a diſheartened and defeated army in expectation of his arrival. There was ſome danger therefore, if the ſiege were not ſpeedily terminated, that the king might ultimately be obliged to raiſe it with ignominy, or to fight the enemy under every diſadvantage. Francis however was not to be deterred from his undertaking. He ſwore a ſolemn oath, that Pavia ſhould be his, or he would periſh in the attempt.

Thus circumſtanced, he conceived a very extraordinary project. Pavia is defended on one ſide by the Teſino, the ſcene of the firſt of the four famous battles by which Hannibal ſignaliſed his invaſion of Italy. The king believed that if this riven could by the labour of his army be diverted from its courſe, the town muſt inſtantly fall into his hands. He was encouraged to the undertaking, by recollecting a ſtratagem of a ſimilar nature by which Cyrus formerly made himſelf maſter of the city of Babylon. It was a thought highly flattering to the grandeur of his ſoul, to imagine that poſterity would in this inſtance inſtitute a parallel between him and Cyrus the Great.

The

The plan for diverting the courſe of the Teſino produced a new and extraordinary ſcene. It was, as may well be believed, a work of uncommon labour. A new channel was to be ſcooped out and deepened; and, while the ſtream was turned into this channel, piles were to be ſunk, and an immenſe mound of earth created, as an effectual impediment to the waters reſuming their former courſe. This was a heavy burthen to the ſoldier, in addition to the diſadvantage of being encamped during the courſe of a winter, remarkably ſevere for the climate in which we fought. By any other army the taſk would have been performed with cloudineſs and diſcontent, if not complained of with repining and murmurs. But here the gaiety of the French character diſplayed itſelf. The nobility of France, who attended their ſovereign in great numbers, accompanied the infantry in their labour. We laid aſide the indulgence of the marquée, of tapeſtry and carpets; we threw off our upper garments; and each of us ſeized a ſpade, a barrow of earth, or a mattock. We put our hands to the engines, and refuſed no effort under pretence that it was fordid or ſevere. While the trees were leafleſs, and nature appeared bound up in froſt, ſweat ran down our faces and bedewed our limbs. The army were encouraged by our example. An employment which under other circumſtances would have been regarded as rigid, was thus made a ſource of new hilarity and amuſement. It was a memorable ſight to behold the venerable and grey-headed leaders of the French army endeavouring to exert the ſtrength and activity of their early years. To me, who had but lately arrived at the ſtature of manhood, and who was accuſtomed to all the exerciſes which give ſtrength and vigour to the frame, this new employment was in no degree burthenſome.

I felt

I felt in it the ſatisfaction that a ſwift man experiences when he enters the liſts of the race; I congratulated myſelf upon the nature of my education; if it be a ſin to covet honour, that guilt was mine; and, ſo great was my appetite for it, that I was inexpreſſibly rejoiced to obſerve the various ways in which it might be gratified.

Strange as it may ſeem, this ſcene of a winter-camp, in the midſt of blood and ſweat, ſurrounded with dangers, and called on for unparalleled exertions, appears to me through the viſto of years that is now interpoſed between, to have been one of the happieſt of my life. The gay labours and ſurprizes of the day, were ſucceeded by a convivial evening in which we did not the leſs open our hearts, though frequently liable to be interrupted in our midnight revels by the inexhauſtible activity and ſtratagems of the enemy. In this various and ever-ſhifting ſcene, I forgot the diſaſters that occurred, and the blood that flowed around me. All ſenſe of a large and impartial morality was, for the time at leaſt, deadened in my breaſt. I was ever upon the alert. The diverſity of events neither ſuffered my ſpirits to flag, nor reflection to awake. It is only upon ſuch occaſions, or occaſions like theſe, that a man is able fully to feel what life is, and to revel in its exuberance. Above all, I was delighted with the ſociety and friendſhip of my brother-officers. They honoured me; they loved me. I ſeemed to feel what ſympathy was; and to have conſcious pleaſure in making one in a race of beings like myſelf. Such were my ſenſations.

It muſt not however be imagined that all about me felt in theſe reſpects as I did. I was deeply indebted in this particular to my youth and my fortune. The old endeavoured to brace themſelves in vain; they ſunk under the continual preſſure.

The poor ſoldier from the ranks laboured inceſſantly, and I laboured as much as he; but he had little opportunity to recruit his vigour and renovate his ſtrength. There was yet another claſs of perſons in the camp, whoſe gaiety was much leſs uninterrupted than mine. Theſe were the king and the generals who commanded under him. They could not be entirely devoid of thought and conſideration. They ſuffered much anxiety from the length of the ſiege; and felt that every period of delay increaſed the doubtfulneſs of the event.

Antonio de Leyva, governor of the city, neceſſarily felt himſelf alarmed at the extraordinary project in which we were engaged, and made every exertion to prevent it. One evening the king ſent for me to his tent, and told me in confidence that the enemy intended that very night to make three ſeveral attacks upon our mound, one on each ſide of the ſtream, and one by means of boats in the centre. Two of theſe, he ſaid, were merely intended as feints; the weſt bank of the Teſino was the point againſt which their principal exertions would be directed. On that ſide he was reſolved to command in perſon; the boats with which he propoſed to reſiſt their flota he confided to one of the moſt famous and valuable officers of his army; the detachment on the eaſt bank he purpoſed to intruſt to my uncle and myſelf. He obſerved that the detachment he could ſpare for that purpoſe, after having formed the other two bodies, and reſerved a ſufficient number for the defence of the camp and the works, would be ſmall; and he warned me to the exertion of a particular vigilance. It would be doubly unfortunate, if a body, the attack upon which was to be merely a feigned one, ſhould nevertheleſs be routed. Go, added he, fulfil my expectations; deport yourſelf anſwerably to the merit of your

firſt atchievement; and depend upon it that you will prove hereafter one of the moſt eminent ſupporters of the martial glory of France.

The marquis de Villeroy divided our little force into two bodies: with the larger he lay in wait for the enemy near the ſcene of the expected attack; the ſmaller he confided to my direction, and placed ſo that we might be able to fall upon the rear of the garriſon-troops as ſoon as they ſhould be fully engaged with our comrades. In the ſituation aſſigned me, I took advantage of the ſkirts of a wood, which enabled me to approach very near to the expected route of our aſſailants without being perceived by them. The night was extremely dark, yet the vicinity of my poſition was ſuch that I could count the numbers of the adverſary as they paſſed along before my hiding place. I was alarmed to find that they amounted to at leaſt the triple of what we had been taught to expect. They were no ſooner paſt, than I diſpatched to the king a young knight, my particular friend, who happened to be with me, to urge the neceſſity of a reinforcement. At the ſame time I ſent a meſſenger to my uncle, by a circuitous route, to inform him of what I had obſerved, and the ſtep I had taken, and to intreat him to defer the attack as long as conſiſtently with propriety it ſhould be poſſible. The enemy however had no ſooner arrived at the place of their deſtination, than the troops of the marquis, no longer capable of reſtraint, ruſhed to engage them. The Spaniards were at firſt ſurpriſed, but a ſhort time led them to ſuſpect the weakneſs of their aſſailants, nor was the aſſiſtance I brought to my uncle ſufficient to turn the fortune of the fight. We loſt many of our men; the reſt apparently gave ground; and it was a vain attempt amidſt the darkneſs of the night, to endeavour to reſtore order and rally them to the aſſault. We

were

were already almoſt completely overpowered, when the ſuccours we expected reached us. They were however unable to diſtinguiſh friend from enemy. A ſtorm of mingled rain and ſnow had come on, which benumbed our limbs, drove fiercely in our faces, and rendered every object alike viewleſs. The carnage which in this ſituation took place, was truly dreadful. Our blows were ſtruck at random. A Frenchman was not leſs dreadful than a Spaniard. When the battle ceaſed, ſcarcely one of the enemy was left alive; but we obſerved with aſtoniſhment and horror the number of the beſiegers who had probably, in the midſt of the confuſion, been cut to pieces by their own countrymen.

I am now arrived at the period which put an end to the feſtivity and jocundneſs of the campaign. All after this was one continued ſeries of diſaſter. About the cloſe of January, our work, though not wholly interrupted, was conſiderably retarded by a ſucceſſion of heavy rains. This was injurious to us in many ways; our project, which was executed in the midſt of waters, rendered additional damp a matter of ſerious conſideration. We were alſo ſeized with an apprehenſion of ſtill greater magnitude, which was ſpeedily realiſed. The ſnows being at length completely diſſolved, and the quantity of water continually increaſing, we perceived one afternoon ſtrong ſymptoms that our mound, the principal ſubject of our labour and ſource of our hope, was giving way in various places. The next morning at day-break, it ruſhed down every where at once with wonderful violence and noiſe. It is difficult to deſcribe the ſenſation of anguiſh which was inſtantly and univerſally diffuſed. The labour of many weeks was overthrown in a moment. As we had proceeded in our work, we every day ſaw ourſelves nearer the object to

which

which we aſpired. At this time our project was almoſt completed, and Pavia was in imagination already in our hands, to gain poſſeſſion of which had coſt us ſuch unremitted exertions, the diſplay of ſo much gallantry, and the loſs of ſo many ſoldiers. We were confounded at the cataſtrophe we ſaw. We gazed at each other, each in want of encouragement, and every one unable to afford it.

Still however we were not deſtitute of advantages. The garriſon began to be in want both of ammunition and proviſions. They were in a general ſtate of diſcontent, almoſt of mutiny, which ſcarcely all the addreſs and authority of the governor were able to ſuppreſs. If the town continued longer unrelieved, it was ſure to fall into our hands. But even this our laſt hope was conſiderably diminiſhed by the intelligence we received the very day after the deſtruction of our mound, that the imperial army, after having received large reinforcements, was approaching in conſiderable force. The king had ſome time before, in the height of his confidence, and elation of his heart, ſent off a detachment of ſix thouſand men to invade the kingdom of Naples; for upon that, as well as the Milaneſe, he had inherited pretenſions from his immediate predeceſſors.

But though the enemy was ſuperior in numbers, and a part perhaps of their forces better diſciplined than ours, they laboured under ſeveral diſadvantages to which we were not expoſed. The emperor, though his dominions were more extenſive, did not derive from them a revenue equal to that of Francis. As he did not take the field in perſon, the war appeared to his ſubjects only a common war, proceeding upon the ordinary motives of war. But my countrymen were led by their ſovereign, were freſh from the recent inſolence of an invaſion of their own territory, and fought at once for perſonal glory

glory and their country's honour. The king who commanded them, ſeemed expreſsly formed to obtain their attachment and affection. His nobles became enthuſiaſtic by the example of his enthuſiaſm, and willingly diſburſed their revenues to give proſperity and eclat to the campaign.

The firſt queſtion that aroſe upon the approach of the enemy, was, whether we ſhould break up the ſiege, and attend in ſome ſtrong poſt the ſlow, but ſure, effect of their want of money, and the conſequent diſperſion of their troops, or wait their attack in our preſent poſture. The former advice was ſafe; but to the gallant ſpirit of Francis it appeared ignominious. He was upon all occaſions the partiſan of rapid meaſures and deciſive proceedings; and his temper, with the exception of a few wary and deliberate counſellors, accorded with that of our whole army. For ſome days we congratulated ourſelves upon the wiſdom of our choice; we preſented to the enemy ſo formidable an appearance, that, notwithſtanding the cogent motives he had to proceed, he heſitated long before he ventured to attack us. At length however the day came, that was pregnant with ſo momentous expectation.

If through the whole limits of our camp there was not a man that did not feel himſelf rouſed upon this glorious occaſion, to me it was eſpecially intereſting. The ſcene accorded with the whole purpoſe of my education, and novelty made it impreſſive. I lived only in the preſent moment. I had not a thought, a wiſh, a ſtraggling imagination, that wandered beyond the circuit of the day. My ſoul was filled; at one minute wild with expectation, and at another awed into ſolemnity. There is ſomething indeſcribably delicious in this concentration of the mind. It raiſes a man above himſelf;

and

and makes him feel a certain nobleneſs and elevation of character, of the poſſeſſion of which he was to that hour unconſcious. Fear and pain were ideas that could find no harbour in my boſom; I regarded this as the moſt memorable of days, and myſelf as the moſt fortunate of mortals. Far indeed was I from anticipating the diſgraceful event in which this elation of heart ſpeedily terminated.

The ſun roſe bright in a cloudleſs ſky. The cold of the ſeaſon was ſuch, as only to give new lightneſs and elaſticity to the muſcles and animal ſpirits. I ſaw few of thoſe objects of nature, which in this delightful climate give ſo ſacred a pleaſure to the human ſoul. But in my preſent temper, there was no object of ſight ſo raviſhing, as the firm and equal ſteps of the martial bands, the impatience of the war-horſe, and the diſplay of military ſtandards; nor any muſic ſo enchanting, as the ſhrilneſs of the pipe, the clangor of the trumpet, the neighing of ſteeds, and the roaring of cannon. It is thus that man diſguiſes to himſelf the real nature of his occupation; and clothes that which is of all things moſt nefarious or moſt to be lamented, with the ſemblance of jubilee and feſtival.

The Imperialiſts were at firſt unable to withſtand the efforts of French valour. They gave way on every ſide; we purſued our advantage with impetuoſity. To the ſlaughter of whole ranks mowed down with tremendous celerity, to the agonies of the dying, I was blind; their groans had no effect on my organ, for my ſoul was occupied in another direction. My horſe's heels ſpurned their mangled limbs, and were red with their blood. I fought not merely with valour, but with fury; I animated thoſe around me by my example and my acclamations. It may ſeem contrary to delicacy for me to ſpeak with this freedom of my own praiſes; but I

am at my preſent writing totally changed and removed from what I was, and I write with the freedom of a general hiſtorian. It is this ſimplicity and ingenuouſneſs that ſhall pervade the whole of my narrative.

The fortune of the day ſpeedily changed. The cowardice and deſertion of our Swiſs allies, gave the firſt ſignal of adverſity. The gallant commander of the garriſon of Pavia, ſallied out in the midſt of the fight, and ſuddenly attacked us in the rear. A ſtratagem of the imperial general effected the route of our cavalry. The whole face of the field was utterly reverſed.

It would be in vain for me to attempt to deſcribe even the ſmall part that I beheld of the calamity and ſlaughter of the French army. At this diſtance of time, the recollection of it opens afreſh the almoſt-obliterated wounds of my heart. I ſaw my friends cut down, and periſh on every ſide. Thoſe who, together with myſelf, had marched out in the morning, ſwelled with exultation and hope, now lay weltering in their blood. Their hopes, their thoughts, their exiſtence, were brought to a fatal determination. The common ſoldiers were hewed and cut to pieces by hundreds without note and obſervation. Many of the firſt nobility of France, made deſperate by the change of the battle, ruſhed into the thickeſt of the foe, and became ſo many voluntary ſacrifices, chooſing rather to periſh, than to turn their backs with diſhonour.

In the battle I had two horſes killed under me. The firſt of them ſuffered a ſort of gradual deſtruction. He had already received one wound in the noſtrils, and another in the neck, when a third ſhot carried away two of his feet, and laid him proſtrate on the earth. Peter, my faithful attendant, obſerved what was paſſing, and immediately

ately brought me a freſh charger; but I had not long mounted him, when he received a wound which killed him on the ſpot. I was myſelf hurt in ſeveral places, and at length the ſtroke of a ſabre brought me to the ground. Here I remained for a long time inſenſible. When I recovered, and looked around me, I found myſelf in entire ſolitude, and could at preſent perceive no trace either of the enemy or of my own people. Soon however I recollected what had paſſed, and was but too well aſſured of the defeat my countrymen had ſuſtained. Weak and battered as I was, I attempted to retire to a place of greater ſecurity. I had ſcarcely changed my ground, before I ſaw a trooper of the enemy ruſhing towards me with the intention to take away my life. Fortunately I obſerved a tree at hand, to the ſhelter of which I haſtened; and, partly by moving the branches to and fro, and partly by ſhifting my poſition, I baffled my adverſary, till he became weary of the attempt. A moment after, I ſaw one of my moſt intimate and familiar companions killed before my eyes. It was not long however before a party of fugitive French came up to the ſpot where I ſtood, and I, like the reſt, was hurried from the field. My uncle periſhed in the battle.

It is wonderful how men can harden their hearts againſt ſuch ſcenes as I then witneſſed. It is wonderful how they can be brought to co-operate in ſuch demoniac fury, and more than demoniac miſchief, barbarity and murder. But they are brought to it; and enter, not from a deplorable neceſſity, but as to a feſtival, in which each man is eager to occupy his place, and ſhare the amuſements. It ſeemed to me at that time, as it ſeems to me now, that it ſhould be enough for a man to contemplate ſuch a field as I ſaw at Pavia, to induce him to abjure

abjure the trade of violence for ever, and to commit his ſword once more to the bowels of the earth, from which it was torn for ſo nefarious a purpoſe.

Theſe ſenſations, though now finally eſtabliſhed in my mind, were at the time of which I am writing but of fleeting duration. The force of education and the firſt bent of my mind, were too ſtrong. The horror which overwhelmed me in the firſt moments of this great national defeat ſubſided; and the military paſſion returned upon me in its original ardour. My convictions, and the moral integrity of my ſoul, were temporary; and I became myſelf a monument of that inconſtancy and that wonder, to which I have juſt alluded.

Various circumſtances however prevented this paſſion from its direct operation. The character of France was altered by the battle of Pavia, though mine remained the ſame. It was in the fulleſt degree deciſive of the fortune of the war. Milan, and every other place in the dutchy, opened their gates to the conqueror: and, in a fortnight, not a Frenchman was leſt in the fields of Italy. Of the whole army only a ſmall body effected an orderly retreat, under the command of the duke of Alenſon. Many perſons of the higheſt diſtinction periſhed in the battle: many were made priſoners by the enemy. France by this event found the liſt of her nobleſſe conſiderably reduced in numbers; add to which, thoſe whoſe loſs ſhe ſuſtained, were almoſt all of them taken from among the moſt diſtinguiſhed and meritorious in the catalogue.

But what conſtituted the principal feature in this memorable event, was that the king himſelf was found in the number of the priſoners; nor was he releaſed by his ungenerous competitor till after more than a twelvemonth's confinement. During this

this period Francis tasted of the dregs of adversity. Inclined in the first instance to judge of his rival by himself, he expected a liberal treatment. In this he was deeply disappointed. After a detention of many months in the Milanese, the scene of his former successes, he was transferred to Madrid. He was personally neglected by the emperor, while his disloyal subject* was treated with singular distinction. The most rigorous terms were proposed to him. All this had the effect, in one instance, of sinking him into a disease of languor and dejection which he was not expected to survive; and, in another, of inducing him to execute an instrument by which he abdicated the crown, and declared his resolution of remaining a prisoner for life. His confinement was at length terminated by his solemnly engaging to compulsory articles, which he was determined to break as soon as he found himself at liberty; an alternative peculiarly grating to the liberality of his spirit. This reverse of fortune materially changed his character. The fine spirit of his ambition was from this time evaporated; and, while he still retained the indefeasable qualities of his soul, and was gallant, kind-hearted and generous, he bartered, as far as was compatible with his disposition, the enterprising and audacious temper he had previously manifested, for the wary and phlegmatic system of his more fortunate competitor. His genius cowered before that of Charles; and the defeat of Pavia may perhaps be considered as having given a deadly wound to the reign of chivalry, and a secure foundation to that of craft, dissimulation, corruption and commerce.

CHAP.

* The Constable of Bourbon.

CHAP. III.

THE lists of military ambition then being closed, if not permanently, at least for a time, my mind took a new bias; and, without dismissing its most cherished and darling passion, pursued a path in the present emergency, to which the accidents of my youth had also guided me. If my mother had survived, she would probably, either not have consented to my serving at the siege of Pavia, or at least would have recalled me to the obscurity of my paternal chateau as soon as the campaign was at an end. I had not fully completed the twentieth year of my age, at the period of the memorable battle in which my sovereign was made prisoner. I was left without adviser or guide; even the marquis de Villeroy, my mother's brother, of whatever consequence his admonitions to me might have proved, was taken from me in this fatal engagement. The king himself perhaps, had it not been for the dreadful calamities in which he was now involved, might have condescended to interest himself in some degree in my welfare. By the course of events, I was left, yet a minor, and with an ample revenue at my disposition, to be wholly guided by the suggestions of my own mind.

In the portion of his reign already elapsed, the splendid and interesting qualities of Francis had given a new spring to the sentiments of the nation. He was the most accomplished and amiable prince of the time in which he lived. There was but one of all the sovereigns of Christendom that could cope with him in power, the emperor Charles; and, as Charles's peculiarities were of a sort

a ſort that Frenchmen were accuſtomed to regard with averſion and contempt, ſo there had not been a doubt among my compatriots, of the ſide upon which the ſuperiority would ultimately reſt. By the events of the day of Pavia they were confounded and overwhelmed. They did not deſpair of their country; they ſoon felt, and felt to its utmoſt extent, the rank which France held among the European ſtates. But the chain of their ideas was interrupted; they could not but be conſcious that the fortune of the kingdom had received a grievous check. The illuſtrious career which they had in fancy already traverſed, was now poſtponed to a diſtant period.

The conſequences which flow from a ſuppreſſed ambition may eaſily be imagined. The nobility of France exchanged the activity of the field for the indulgences of the table: that concentrated ſpirit which had ſought to expand itſelf upon the wideſt field, now found vent in the exhibition of individual expence: and, above all, the ſordid and inglorious paſſion for gaming, a vice eminently characteriſtic of the age in which I have lived, now eſpecially gained ſtrength, and drew multitudes into its deſtructive vortex. It was perhaps impoſſible for a young man to have entered the theatre of the world under leſs favourable auſpices.

In what I have already written, I felt myſelf prompted to enlarge with complacency upon the ſentiments and ſcenes of my youth; and I have yielded to the ſuggeſtion. The ſame internal admonition makes me ſhrink from entering with minuteneſs into the detail of my ruin. I recollect my infatuation with abhorrence; I fly from the memory with ſenſations inexpreſſibly painful; I regard it as a cloud that overſhadowed and

blackened

blackened for ever the fair proſpects of my earlier years.

I ſhall not enumerate all my youthful companions, or all my youthful follies. I committed a miſtake obvious enough, at this immature period of my exiſtence, when I miſtook profuſion and extravagance for ſplendour and dignity; and the prudent economy which my mother had practiſed, ſerved in the preſent inſtance as the pandar to my vices. The whole tendency of my education had been to inſpire me with a proud and reſtleſs deſire of diſtinction; and I was not content to play a ſecond part in the career of my vices, as I ſhould not have been content to play a ſecond part in the genuine theatre of honour and fame. In all that was thoughtleſsly ſpirited and gaily profligate I led the way to my compeers, and was conſtantly held up by them as an example. By this conduct I incurred the cenſure of the rigorous and the old; but the voice of cenſure reached me much ſeldomer than that of adulation. My perſon and demeanour were the topics of general applauſe. I was tall and well-proportioned; my perſon was ſlender and agile, but with an appearance of the fulleſt health; my countenance was open, commanding and animated. My rank and ſituation in the world gave me confidence; the fire and impetuoſity of my temper rendered my geſtures eaſy, rapid, expreſſive and graceful. The conſequence of all this was to confirm me in a plan of life which I early laid down to myſelf, and from which I never in any inſtance deviated. I put aſide thoſe rules as ſplenetic and hypercritical, which confeſſors preach, and with which the preceptors of young men are accuſtomed to weary and alienate the minds of their pupils. The charge of being diſorderly and unthinking I deſpiſed; that

that of imprudence, even when meant for blame, founded in my ear like the voice of encomium. But, accuſtomed from education to ſentiments of honour, and from habit to the language of eulogy, it is difficult for any man to be more firmly bent than I was to incur no breath of diſhonour, or to drew the line more peremptorily, between the follies of youth, and the aberrations of a groſs and unprincipled ſpirit.

It may be alleged indeed, and with conſiderable juſtice, that the habit of gaming is an exception to this ſtatement. It was with great heſitation and reluctance that I entered into this habit. I ſaw it as it was, and as every ingenous and undebauched mind muſt ſee it, baſe and ſordid. The poſſeſſion of ſome degree of wealth I regarded indeed as indiſpenſible to a man who would fill a lofty and reſpectable character in the world, a character that, by uniting the advantages of exterior appearance with the actions of a hero, ſhould extort the homage of his ſpecies. But, in the picture I drew of this man in my mind, I conſidered wealth as an accident, the attendant on his birth, to be diſpenſed with dignity, not to be adverted to with minuteneſs of attention. Deep play is certainly ſufficiently inconſiſtent with this character. The direct purpoſe of the gameſter is to transfer money from the pocket of his neighbour into his. He rouſes his ſleepy and wearied attention by the moſt ſordid of all motives. The fear of loſing pierces his heart with anguiſh; and to gain, to obtain an advantage for himſelf, which can ſcarcely exceed, and which ſeldom equals, the injury his competitor ſuffers, is the circumſtance which moſt tranſports his heart with delight. For this he watches; for this he calculates. An honourable gameſter does not

ſeize

ſeize with premeditation the moment when his adverſary is deprived by wine or any other cauſe of his uſual ſelf-poſſeſſion. He does not ſeek with ſober malice to play upon his paſſions. He does not enter with avidity into the conteſt with an unpractiſed, but preſuming rival. But he cannot avoid rejoicing, when he finds that accident has given him an unuſual advantage. I have often thought that I could better underſtand how a man of honour could reconcile himſelf to the accurſed and murderous trade of war, than to the ſyſtem of the gaming-table. In war he fights with a ſtranger, a man with whom he has no habits of kindneſs, and who is fairly appriſed that he comes againſt him with ruinous intent But in play he robs perhaps his brother, his friend, the partner of his boſom; or, in every event, a man ſeduced into the ſnare with all the arts of courteſy, and whom he ſmiles upon, even while he ſtabs.

I am talking here the mere reaſon and common ſenſe of the queſtion as it relates to mankind in general. But it is with other feelings that I reflect upon the concern I have myſelf individually in the ſubject. Years roll on in vain; ages themſelves are uſeleſs here; looking forward, as I do, to an exiſtence that ſhall endure till time ſhall be no more; no time can wipe away the remembrance of the bitter anguiſh that I have endured, the conſequence of gaming. It is torture! It is madneſs! Poverty, I have drained thy cup to the dregs! I have ſeen my wife and my children looking to me in vain for bread! Which is the moſt intolerable diſtreſs? That of the period, in which all the comforts of life gradually left me; in which I caught at every fragment of promiſe, and every fragment failed; in which I roſe every

morning

morning to pamper myſelf with empty deluſions; in which I ate the apples of purgatory, fair without, but within bitterneſs and aſhes; in which I toſſed, through endleſs, ſightleſs nights, upon the couch of diſappointment and deſpair? Or the period, when at length all my hopes were at an end; when I fled with horror to a foreign climate; when my family, that ſhould have been my comfort, gave me my moſt poignant agony; when I looked upon them, naked, deſtitute and exiles, with the tremendous thought—what and who it was that had cauſed their ruin? Adverſity, without conſolation, adverſity when its ſting is remorſe, ſelf-abhorrence and ſelf-contempt,—hell has no miſery by which it can be thrown into ſhade or exceeded!

Why do I dwell upon, or at leaſt why do I anticipate, this deteſted circumſtance of my ſtory? Let me add one remark in this place, and paſs on to the other particulars of this epoch of my prodigality. It is true, I muſt take this ſhameful appellation to myſelf—I was a gameſter. But, in the beginning, I took no concern in that ſpecies of ſcience which is often implied in that appellation. My games were games of hazard, not of ſkill. It appeared to my diſtempered apprehenſion, to be only a mode in which for a man to diſplay his fortitude and philoſophy. I was flattered with the practice of gaming, becauſe I ſaw in it, when gracefully purſued, the magnanimity of the Stoic, combined with the manners of a man of the world; a magnanimity that no ſucceſs is able to intoxicate, and no viciſſitude to ſubvert. I committed my property to the hazard of the die; and I placed my ambition in laughing alike at the favours of fortune, and her frowns. In the ſequel however I found myſelf deceived. The fickle goddeſs ſuffi-

ciently proved that ſhe had the power of making me ſerious. But in her moſt tremendous reverſes I was never influenced to do any thing that the moſt ſcrupulous gameſter regards as diſhonourable. I ſay not this for the purpoſe of giving colour and ſpeciouſneſs to my tale. I ſay it, becauſe I have laid it down to myſelf in this narrative as a ſacred principle, to relate the ſimple, unaltered truth.

Another characteriſtic of the reign of Francis the Firſt, is its gallantries. It is well known how much the king was himſelf occupied with attachments of this ſort; his government was rather the government of women than of politicians; and the manners of the ſovereign ſtrongly tended to fix the habits of his ſubjects. A very young man uſually rather takes the tone of his paſſions from thoſe about him, than forms one that is properly his own; and this was my caſe in the preſent inſtance as well as in the preceding. Originally of an amorous conſtitution, I ſhould perhaps have quieted the reſtleſſneſs of my appetites without oſtentation and eclat, had not the conduct of my youthful aſſociates in general led me to regard gallantry as an accompliſhment indiſpenſably neceſſary in a young man of rank. It muſt be confeſſed indeed that this offence againſt the rigour of diſcipline has a thouſand advantages over that of gaming. Few women of regular and reputable lives, have that eaſe of manners, that flow of fancy, and that graceful intrepidity of thinking and expreſſing themſelves, that is ſometimes to be found among thoſe who have diſcharged themſelves in a certain degree from the tyranny of cuſtom. There is ſomething irreſiſtibly captivating in that voluptuouſneſs, which, while it aſſumes a certain air of freedom, uniformly and with preference conforms itſelf to the dictates of unſophiſticated delicacy.

delicacy. A judicious and limited voluptuouſneſs, is neceſſary to the cultivation of the mind, to the poliſhing of the manners, to the refining of ſentiment, and the developement of the underſtanding; and a woman deficient in this reſpect, may be of uſe for the government of our families, but can neither add to the enjoyments, nor fix the partiality, of a man of animation and taſte.

But, whatever there may be in theſe conſiderations, certain it is, that the conduct I purſued in matters of gallantry, led me into great and ſerious expences. The miſtreſſes, with whom I chanced to aſſociate, had neither the inexpreſſible captivation of madame de Chateaubriant*, nor the aſpiring and impreſſive manners of the dutcheſs d' Etampes†. They had however beauty and vivacity, frolic without rudeneſs, and ſoftneſs without timidity. They had paid ſome regard to points of knowledge and taſte, conſidering theſe as additional means for fixing the partiality of their paramours, and knowing that they had no ſecurity for the permanence of their proſperity but in the variety of their attractions. In their ſociety I was led into new trains of reflection, a nicer conſideration of human paſſion and the varieties of human character, and, above all, into a greater quickneſs and delicacy in matter of intellectual taſte. My hours, for the moſt part, rolled ſwiftly and eaſily away, ſometimes in the ſociety of the young, the gay and ambitious of my own ſex, and ſometimes in the ſofter and more delicious intercourſe of the fair. I lived in the midſt of all that Paris could at that time furniſh of ſplendid and luxurious. This ſyſtem of living was calculated to lull me in pleaſing dreams, and to waſte away exiſtence in delirious ſoftneſs. It ſuf-

* † Miſtreſſes of Francis I.

ficiently accorded with the ſad period of our ſovereign's captivity, when my young compatriots ſought to drown the ſenſe of public and patriotic conſiderations in copious draughts of pleaſure; nor did the monarch's return immediately reſtore to France her former haughtineſs and pride.

The courſe of ſenſuality in which I was now engaged, though it did not abſolutely ſink into groſſneſs, may well be ſuppoſed to have trod upon the very edge of licence. I and my companions were young; we were made fearleſs and preſuming by fortune and by rank; we had laid aſide thoſe more rigorous reſtraints which render the ſoberer part of mankind plauſible and decent, by making them timid and trite. I will not contaminate the minds of my innocent and inexperienced readers by entering into the detail of the follies in which I was engaged.

One thing it is neceſſary for me to remark as eſſential to the main thread of my ſtory. My expences of all kinds, during this period of ſelf-deſertion, drained my reſources, but did not tarniſh my good name. My exceſſes were regarded by ſome as ornamental and becoming, but by all were admitted as venial. The laurels I had won in the field of military honour were not obſcured by my ſubſequent conduct. I was univerſally ranked among the moſt promiſing and honourable of the young noblemen of France. I had ſome rivals; I did not paſs through this turbulent and diverſified ſcene wholly without diſputes; but no one caſt a reflection upon my name, no one ventured to ſpeak of me in terms of ſupercilioufneſs and opprobrium. Nor was my temper more injured than my reputation. From every diſpute I extricated myſelf with grace and propriety; I ſtudied the pleaſure and eaſe of all with whom I aſſociated;

and

and no man enjoyed more extenſively than I did the ſweets of friendſhip, as far as the ſweets of friendſhip can be extenſively enjoyed.

CHAP. IV.

I HAD been now two years in habits of life and a mode of expence extremely injurious to my patrimony, when a circumſtance occurred, which promiſed completely to deliver me from the ruinous conſequences of my own folly. This was no other than my encounter with that incomparable woman, who afterwards became the partner of my life, and the mother of my children. I cannot even now recollect her without tears: the ſentiment which her very name excites in my mind, is a mingled feeling, on the one hand, of the moſt exquiſite and unſpeakable delight, a feeling that elevates and expands and electrifies my throbbing heart; and, on the other, of the bittereſt anguiſh and regret.—I muſt develop the ſource of this feeling.

Marguerite Louiſe Iſabeau de Damville was, at the period of our firſt meeting, in the nineteenth year of her age. Her complexion was of the moſt perfect tranſparency, her eyes black and ſparkling, and her eyebrows dark and long. Such were the perfect ſmoothneſs and clearneſs of her ſkin, that at nineteen ſhe appeared five years younger than ſhe was, and ſhe long retained this extreme juvenility of form. Her ſtep was airy and light as that of a young fawn, yet at the ſame time firm, and indicative of ſtrength of body and vigour of mind. Her voice, like the whole of her external appearance,

appearance, was expreſſive of undeſigning, I had almoſt ſaid childiſh, ſimplicity. Yet, with all this playfulneſs of appearance, her underſtanding was bold and correct. Her mind was well furniſhed with every thing that could add to her accompliſhments as a wife or a mother. Her indulgent parents had procured her every advantage of education, and circumſtances had been uncommonly favourable to her improvement. She was encouraged and aſſiſted in the art of drawing, for which ſhe diſcovered a very early talent, by Leonardo da Vinci; and ſhe formed her poetical taſte from the converſation and inſtructions of Clement Marot. But, amidſt the ſingular aſſemblage of her intellectual accompliſhments, there was nothing by which ſhe was ſo much diſtinguiſhed, as the uncommon prudence of her judgments, and the unalterable amiableneſs of her manners. This was the woman deſtined to crown my happineſs, and conſummate my miſery. If I had never known her, I ſhould never have taſted of true pleaſure; if I had been guided by her counſels, I ſhould not have drained to the very dregs the cup of anguiſh.

The houſe of her father, the marquis de Damville, was the reſort of all the moſt eminent wits and ſcholars of that period, particularly of Marot, Rabelais, Eraſmus, and Scaliger. This was my firſt inducement to frequent it. My education had inſpired me with an inextinguiſhable love of literature; and the diſſipation in which I was at this time involved, could not entirely interrupt the propenſity. The moſt thoughtleſs and extravagant period of my life had occaſioned intervals of ſtudy and reflection; and the gay, animated and ingenious converſation of the men I have mentioned, had always peculiar charms for me.

I had

I had continued for ſome time to viſit at the marquis's hotel, before I encountered the beautiful Marguerite. The firſt time I ſaw her, ſhe made a deep impreſſion upon me. The marquis, who was one of the moſt benevolent and enlightened of mankind, had been led by my character and manners to conceive a warm friendſhip for me. He ſaw the ruin in which I was heedleſsly involving myſelf, and believed that it was not yet too late to ſave me. As he thought there was no method ſo likely to effect my reformation as the interpoſition of domeſtic affections, he was not unwilling to encourage the attachment I began to feel for his daughter. On my part I wanted but little encouragement. I no ſooner obſerved her manners, and became acquainted with her merits, than my heart was unalterably fixed. I became as it were a new man. I was like one, who, after his eyes had grown imperceptibly dim, till at length every object appeared indiſtinct and of a gloomy general hue, has his ſight inſtantaneouſly reſtored, and beholds the fabric of the univerſe in its genuine clearneſs, brilliancy and truth. I was aſtoniſhed at my own folly that I could ſo long have found gratification in pleaſures ſo mean and ſenſual. I was aſhamed of my own degradation. I could not endure the compariſon between the ſhowy, unſubſtantial attractions of the women I had hitherto frequented, and the charms of the adorable Marguerite. The purity of her mind ſeemed to give a celeſtial brilliancy and ſoftneſs to the beauties of her perſon. The groſs and brutal purſuits of the debauchee are often indeed deſcribed by the ſame epithets as the virtuous and refined paſſion with which I was now for the firſt time inſpired; but experience convinced me that they differed in their moſt eſſential features.

The

The marquis ſaw the ſtate of my mind, and addreſſed me thus: Count, ſaid he, I feel the moſt ardent friendſhip for you. I am inexpreſſibly concerned for your welfare. You will be convinced of this, when I have furniſhed you with the clue to my late conduct towards you. I regard you, if not as a ruined man, at leaſt as a man in the high road to ruin. Your preſent habits are of the moſt dangerous ſort; they appear to you perfectly conformable to principles of the ſtricteſt honour; nay, they come recommended to you by a certain eclat and dignity with which they ſeem to be ſurrounded. I could ſay to you, Recollect yourſelf. Be not miſled by deluſive appearances. Conſider the preſent ſtate of your fortune, and the ſtate in which your mother left it. You cannot be ignorant how greatly it is impaired. How has this circumſtance ariſen? Have your revenues been expended in the ſervice of your country? Have you purchaſed any thing by them that will confer on you laſting renown? Put together the ſum of actions, which, piece by piece, you have been willing to regard as indifferent and innocent, if not as graceful and becoming. You cannot but be ſtruck with their monſtrous deformity. Is it poſſible that you can be ignorant of the nature of poverty? There is ſuch a thing as honourable poverty. The poverty of Cincinnatus was honourable, who impoveriſhed himſelf by paying the fine which was factiouſly impoſed on his ſon, and then was contented to paſs his time alternately between the higheſt ſituations and the moſt rigid ſimplicity. The poverty of a man of genius, ſuch as Rabelais, if not honourable, is intereſting, when we compare his merits and worth with that of many of thoſe perſons upon whom fortune has blindly laviſhed her favours. It is honourable, if

he

he have declined the means of enriching himſelf by the ſacrifice of his independence and his principles. But of all earthly things the moſt contemptible, is the man who, having waſted his goods in riotous living, yet hungers after the luxuries that have proved his bane, and feaſts himſelf upon the ſteam of dainties of which he has loſt the ſubſtance. Poverty, always ſufficiently diſadvantageous in a degenerate age, where attention and courtſhip are doled forth with ſcales of gold, is tremendous to him. He is the ſcorn of all mankind. Wherever he is a gueſt, he is invited only to be trampled upon and inſulted He is capable of nothing, and is a burthen to ſociety and mankind. The helpleſſneſs of age advances upon him with ſtealing ſteps, and he is deſtined to gather all its miſeries and none of its conſolations.

I might have talked to you thus, but I refuſed it. I apprehend ſomething of the nature of advice. I know that it can ſeldom be attended with its genuine effect, and will never be received with deference and pleaſure, where its motives are capable of miſconſtruction. If I had talked to you thus, I might have appeared to be indulging the tyranny of age; I might have ſeemed to aſſume an unbecoming air of ſuperiority and command: it could not have been clear that I was really and honeſtly intereſted, in that about which I affected ſo much concern. I doubt not the ingenuouſneſs of your nature. I doubt not that you would have been ſtruck with the picture. But I muſt be permitted to doubt the adequate and laſting effect of my expoſtulation. I was not willing by my forwardneſs and loquacity to wear out one of the great ſprings of human improvement.

I have determined on your reform. For that purpoſe I think it neceſſary to combine my re-

monſtrances and advice, with a change of your habits and ſituation. You have taſted largely of what are commonly called the pleaſures of life, but there are pleaſures that you have not taſted. At this moment you anticipate them, and anticipate them with the ardour of a lover. But you know not yet all the gratifications that attend upon domeſtic affections.

I am willing to beſtow upon you my daughter. I conſent to prove the purity of my advice, and the ſincerity of my regard, by committing her happineſs to the riſk. She is a treaſure, the equal of which perhaps the world does not hold. I ſpeak not of her perſonal attractions. But in underſtanding, accompliſhments and virtue, I firmly believe, no woman living can compare with her. In poſſeſſing her, you will be bleſſed beyond the lot of princes. But, at the ſame time that I ſhall thus put happineſs within your graſp, remember that I commit to your diſpoſal the happineſs of Marguerite. You are a worthy and an honourable man; your talents and your virtues will conſtitute her felicity. Her portion will redeem the injury which your patrimony has ſuffered from your exceſſes, and you will have enough for yourſelves, and for your mutual offſpring. I cannot believe, that, with ſuch a depoſit intruſted to you, you will conſent to bring her to miſery and ruin.

I have one condition however to ſtipulate with you. I require of you as the pledge of her happineſs, that you break off your preſent modes of life, that you ſeparate yourſelf from your connections, and retire into the country upon your paternal eſtate. You are yet too young to be in danger from that tyranny of cuſtom, which often renders men more advanced in life incapable of reliſhing the ſimple and genuine pleaſures. You will find

contentment

contentment and joy in the ſociety of my daughter, and in the boſom of your riſing family. You will be happy in the circle of your own hearth, and have little to aſk of the reſt of mankind. If, in any ill-omened and inauſpicious moment, the allurements of your preſent vices (forgive the plainneſs of my ſpeech) ſhould reſume their power over you, I hope at leaſt that I ſhall never live to ſee it; that I ſhall not be taught by bitter experience, that I have ſacrificed to the diſintereſtedneſs of my friendſhip the happineſs of my daughter and of my poſterity!

My heart weeps blood, while I record the admonitions of this noble and generous man. A nobler France did not contain through all her boundaries! Refined by literature, poliſhed by the beſt ſociety his age could afford, grown grey in the field of honour, and particularly diſtinguiſhed by the perſonal attachment and confidence of his ſovereign! What was all this advice to me! What return did I make to this unparalleled kindneſs and friendſhip! I ruined this admirable woman! I involved her in poverty and ſhame! With the moſt ſavage barbarity I prepared for her an immature grave! Can I forget this! Of what avail to me are immortal life and immortal youth? Oh, Marguerite, Marguerite! For ever thy image haunts me! For ever thy ghoſt upbraids me! How little have I proved myſelf worthy of ſuch a partner! Rather what puniſhmert, what plagues, what ſhame and deteſtation have I not deſerved! Praiſed be Heaven! the laſt prayer of the marquis of Damville at leaſt was granted! He did not live to witneſs my relapſe, my profligacy and inſanity!

I reſume the thread of my ſtory.—I liſtened to the addreſs of the marquis with reverence and admiration. I accepted his conditions with joy. I married

married his adorable daughter, and conducted her to my paternal eſtate in the Bourdelois. Now only it was that I taſted of perfect happineſs. To judge from my own experience in this ſituation, I ſhould ſay, that nature has atoned for all the diſaſters and miſeries ſhe ſo copiouſly and inceſſantly pours upon her ſons, by this one gift, the tranſcendant enjoyment and nameleſs delights which, wherever the heart is pure and the ſoul is refined, wait on the attachment of two perſons of oppoſite ſexes. My beloved Margnerite guided and directed me, at the ſame time that ſhe was ever ſtudying my gratification. I inſtructed her by my experience, while ſhe enlightened me by the rectitude and deciſion of her taſte. Ours was a ſober and dignified happineſs, and its very ſobriety ſerved to give it additional voluptuouſneſs. We had each our ſeparate purſuits, whether for the cultivation of our minds, or the promotion of our mutual intereſts. Separation gave us reſpectability in each other's eyes, while it prepared us to enter with freſh ardour into ſociety and converſation. In company with each other, hours paſſed over us, and appeared but minutes. It has been ſaid to be a peculiar felicity for any one to be praiſed by a man who is himſelf eminently a ſubject of praiſe; how much happier to be prized and loved by a perſon worthy of love? A man may be prized and valued by his friend; but in how different a ſtyle of ſentiment from the regard and attachment that may reign in the boſom of his miſtreſs or his wife? Self-complacency and ſelf-ſatisfaction may perhaps be numbered among the principal ſources of contentment. It is neceſſary for him who would endure exiſtence with patience, that he ſhould conceive himſelf to be ſomething, that he ſhould be perſuaded he is not a cypher in the muſter-roll of man.

man. How bitter is the anguiſh we are ſometimes doomed to ſuſtain in this reſpect from the marks we receive of other men's indifference and contempt? To feel that we are loved by one whoſe love we have deſerved, to be employed in the mutual interchange of the marks of this love, habitually to ſtudy the happineſs of one by whom our happineſs is ſtudied in return, this is the moſt deſirable, as it is the genuine and unadulterated condition of human nature. I muſt have ſome one to ſympathiſe with; I cannot bear to be cut off from all relations; I deſire to experience a confidence, a concord, an attachment, that cannot riſe up between common acquaintance. In every ſtate we long for ſome fond boſom on which to reſt our weary head, ſome ſpeaking eye with which to exchange the glances of intelligence and affection. Then the ſoul warms and expands itſelf; then it ſhuns the obſervation of every other beholder; then it melts with feelings that are inexpreſſible, but that the heart underſtands without the aid of words; then the eyes ſwim with rapture; then the frame languiſhes with enjoyment; then the ſouls burns with fire; then the two perſons thus bleſt, are no longer two, diſtance vaniſhes, one thought animates, one mind informs them. Thus love acts; thus it is ripened to perfection; never does man feel himſelf ſo much alive, ſo truly etherial, as when, burſting the bonds of diffidence, uncertainty and reſerve, he pours himſelf entire into the boſom of the woman he adores.

Marguerite de Damville was particularly diſtinguiſhed from every other woman I ever knew by the juſtneſs of her taſte and the vividneſs of her feelings. This circumſtance was a fund of inexhauſtible delight and improvement to me. We were both of us well acquainted with the moſt eminent

eminent poets and fine writers of modern times. But, when we came to read them together, they preſented themſelves in a point of view in which they had never been ſeen by us before. It is perhaps more important that poetry and every thing that excites the imagination or appeals to the heart, ſhould be read in ſolitude than in ſociety. But the true way to underſtand our author in theſe caſes, is to employ each of theſe modes in ſucceſſion. The terrible, the majeſtic, the voluptuous and the melting, are all of them in a conſiderable degree affairs of ſympathy, and we never judge of them ſo infallibly or with ſo much ſatisfaction, as when, in the preſence of each other, the emotion is kindled in either boſom at the ſame inſtant, the eye-beams, pregnant with ſentiment and meaning, involuntarily meet and mingle, the voice of the reader becomes modulated by the ideas of his author, and that of the hearer, by an accidental interjection of momentary comment or applauſe, confeſſes its accord. It was in this manner that we read together the admirable ſonnets of Petrarch, and paſſed in review the ſublime effuſions of Dante. The letters of Eloiſa to Abelard afforded us ſingular delight. We ſearched into the effuſions of the Troubadours, and, among all their abſurdities and inequality, we found a wildneſs, a daring pouring forth of the ſoul, an unpruned richneſs of imagination, and from time to time a grandeur of conception and audacious eccentricity of thought, that filled us with unlooked for tranſport. At other times when not regularly engaged in this ſpecies of reading, we would repeat paſſages to each other, communicate the diſcoveries of this ſort that either had made in ſolitude, and point out unobſerved beauties, that perhaps neither of us would have remarked, but for the ſuggeſtions of the other. It is impoſſible

for

for two perſons to be conſtituted ſo much alike, but that one of them ſhould have a more genuine and inſtantaneous reliſh for one ſort of excellence, and another for another. Thus we added to each other's ſtores, and acquired a largeneſs of conception and liberality of judgment that neither of us would have arrived at, if ſeparate. It is difficult to imagine how prolific this kind of amuſement proved of true happineſs. We were mutually delighted to remark the accord of our feelings, and ſtill more ſo, as we perceived that acord to be hourly increaſing, and what ſtruck either as a blemiſh in the other, wearing out and diſappearing. We were alſo led by the ſame means to advert to the powers of mind exiſting in each, the rectitude of judgment and delicacy of feeling. As our attachment hourly increaſed, we rejoiced in this reciprocation of benefits, while each gave or received ſomething that added to value of mind and worth of character. Mutual eſteem was inceſſantly kept alive, and mutual eſteem is the only ſubſtantial baſis of love. Each of us hourly bleſſed our common lot, while each believed it impracticable elſewhere to have found ſo much worth blended with ſo much ſweetneſs.

But we did not confine ourſelves to the library and fire-ſide. We walked, we rode, we travelled together. We obſerved together the beauties of nature, and the ſyſtem of the univerſe. We traverſed many provinces of France, and ſome parts of Italy and Spain. We examined together the characters of mankind, as they are modified by the varieties of natural deſcent, or the diverſities of political government. In all this we found peculiar gratification. There is ſomething in the ſcent and impreſſion of a balmy atmoſphere, in the luſtre of ſunſhine, in the azure heaven and the purple clouds,

clouds, in the opening of proſpects on this ſide and on that, in the contemplation of verdure and fertility and induſtry and ſimplicity and cheerfulneſs in all their variations, in the very act and exerciſe of travelling, peculiarly congenial to the human frame. It expands the heart, it makes the ſpirit dance, and exquiſitely diſpoſes us for ſocial enjoyment. The mind becomes more elevated and refined, it aſſumes a microſcopical and unwonted ſenſibility, it feels things which in ordinary moments are unheeded and unknown, it enjoys things too evaneſcent for a name and too minute to be arreſted, it trembles with pleaſure through every fibre and every articulation.

One thing is neceſſary to be mentioned in this place, though, while it adds to the fidelity of delineation, I am aware it breaks the tone of feeling and the harmony of the picture. But it is not my intention in this hiſtory to paſs myſelf for better than I am. I have laid down to myſelf the ſacred maxim of abſolute truth and impartiality. I muſt confeſs therefore, with whatever anguiſh, my extreme inferiority to my incomparable partner. She had all the ſimplicity of genuine taſte. The more ſhe delivered herſelf up to nature, the greater was her content. All ſuperfluous appendages and ſhow appeared to her as ſo many obſtacles to enjoyment. She derived her happineſs from the tone of her own mind, and ſtood in no need of the gaping admiration and ſtupid wonder of others to make her feel herſelf happy. But I retained ſtill the original vice of my mind. The geſtures of worſhip, and the voice of applauſe were neceſſary to me. I did not ſuffice to myſelf. I was not ſatisfied with the tranquil and inglorious fruition of genuine pleaſures, forgetting the vain and anxious tumult of the world, and forgotten by thoſe who figured on its theatre.

It

It may be, that Marguerite could, and ought by inſenſible degrees, to have rooted out this diſeaſe of my mind. But I am concerned only with the ſtatement of facts; and I know that no ſuch thing was the effect of our intercourſe.

This abſurd paſſion did not however at this time lead me to any fatal extremities. It contented itſelf with the frivolous gratification reſulting from a certain portion of oſtentation and expence. I maintained a conſiderable train of ſervants. My apartments were magnificent, and my furniture ſplendid. When we travelled, it was with an attendance little ſhort of princely. Idiot that I was, to regard this as an addition to the genuine pleaſures which I have above enumerated! When we were at home, every accidental gueſt was received and entertained with extraordinary pomp, a pomp not directed to add to his accommodation, but that was deſigned to leave him impreſſed with aſtoniſhment and admiration at the ſpirit of his hoſt. Often indeed did I feel this oſtentation an incumbrance. Often did I languiſh for the eaſe and freedom which reſult from a mediocrity of circumſtances. But this I called, doing honour to my anceſtors and my country, and vindicating the conſideration due to the houſe of St. Leon.

To quit this painful recollection.—A circumſtance which tended at this time to fill up the meaſure of my happineſs, conſiſted in the dear pledges which Marguerite bore me of our mutual affection. It is impoſſible for him who has not experienced it, to conceive the accumulation which a genuine tenderneſs derives from this ſource. The difficulties are many, that attend upon pregnancy; trifles are at that period ſources of fatigue and injury; it is neceſſary that the perſon ſhould be protected,

and

and the mind tranquil. We love to watch over a delicate plant, that appears to call for all our anxiety and attention. There is in this caſe the ſentiment, without the repulſive circumſtances, that attend upon our ſympathy with a dangerous and alarming diſeaſe. Marguerite, by her ſenſibility and growing attachment, abundantly rewarded my cares. At length the critical period arrives, when an event ſo extraordinary occurs, as cannot fail to put the human frame in conſiderable jeopardy. Never ſhall I forget the interview between us immediately ſubſequent to her firſt parturition, the effuſion of ſoul with which we met each other after all danger ſeemed to have ſubſided, the kindneſs which animated us, increaſed as it was by ideas of peril and ſuffering, the ſacred ſenſation with which the mother preſented her infant to her huſband, or the complacency with which we read in each other's eyes a common ſentiment of melting tenderneſs and inviolable attachment!

This, ſhe ſeemed to ſay, is the joint reſult of our common attachment. It partakes equally of both, and is the ſhrine in which our ſubſtance and our life have been poured together, never to be ſeparated. Let other lovers teſtify their engagements by preſents and tokens; we record and ſtamp our attachment in this precious creature, a creature of that ſpecies which is more admirable than any thing elſe the world has to boaſt, a creature ſuſceptible of pleaſure and pain, of affection and love, of ſentiment and fancy, of wiſdom and virtue. This creature will daily ſtand in need of an aid we ſhall delight to afford; will require our meditations and exertions to forward its improvement, and confirm its merits and its worth. We ſhall each blend our exertions for that purpoſe, and our union, confirmed by this common object of our labour

and

and affection, will every day become more ſacred and indiſſoluble.—All this the preſent weakneſs of my beloved Marguerite would not allow her to ſay. But all this occurred to my reflections; and, when we had time tranquilly to compare our recollection of the event, it plainly appeared that in all this our hearts and conceptions had moſt truly ſympathiſed.

The poſſeſſing a third object, a common centre of anxiety to both, is far from weakening the regard of ſuch a couple for each other. It does not ſeparate or divert them; it is a new link of connection. Each is attached to it the more for the ſake of either; each regards it as a ſort of branch or ſcion, repreſenting the parent; each rejoices in its health, its good-humour, its ſmiles, its increaſe in ſize, in ſtrength and in faculties, principally from the idea of the gratification they will communicate to the other. Were it not for this idea, were it poſſible the pleaſure ſhould not be mutual, the ſentiment would be ſtripped of its principal elevation and refinement; it would be comparatively cold, ſelfiſh, ſolitary and inane.

In the firſt ten years of our marriage my wife brought me five children, two ſons and three daughters. The ſecond ſon only died in his infancy. My predominant paſſion at this time was that of domeſtic pleaſures and employments, and I devoted myſelf, jointly with the mother, to the cultivation of the minds of my children. They all in a conſiderable degree rewarded our care; they were all amiable. Taught by the example of their parents, they lived in uncommon harmony and affection. Charles, the eldeſt, was a lad of a bold and active diſpoſition; but the ſentiments of virtue and honour that were infuſed into him both by Marguerite and myſelf, found a favourable reception,

reception, and promiſed to render thoſe qualities, which, if left to themſelves might have been turbulent and dangerous, productive of the happieſt conſequences. Julia, his eldeſt ſiſter, was uncommonly mild and affectionate, alive to the ſlighteſt variations of treatment, profoundly depreſſed by every mark of unkindneſs, but exquiſitely ſenſible to demonſtrations of ſympathy and attachment. She appeared little formed to ſtruggle with the difficulties of life and the frowns of the world; but, in periods of quietneſs and tranquillity, nothing could exceed the ſweetneſs of her character and the faſcination of her manners. Her chief attachment was to her mother, though ſhe was by no means capable of her mother's active beneficence and heroic fortitude. Louiſa, the ſecond daughter, reſembled her mother in perſon, and promiſed to reſemble her in character. Marguerite, the youngeſt, differed from the whole family in the playfulneſs and frolic of her diſpoſition. Her vivacity was inexhauſtible, and was continually diſplaying itſelf in innocent tricks, and ſmart, unexpected ſallies. Nothing could poſſibly be more ingenuous than this admirable infant; nothing more kind, conſiderate and enthuſiaſtic in her tenderneſs and grief, when an occaſion occurred to call forth theſe ſentiments. But, the moment the ſorrowful occaſion was over, ſhe would reſume all her vivacity; and even ſometimes, in the midſt of her tears, ſome trait of her native humour would eſcape. I know not whether all the family were not more attached to the little Marguerite than to any other individual member, as ſhe certainly oftenеſt contributed to their amuſement and pleaſure.—Such was the amiable circle, one and all of whom have been involved by me in the moſt tremendous ruin and diſgrace.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

CHARLES was now nine years of age. His mother and myſelf had delighted ourſelves with obſerving and forwarding the opening of his infant mind, and had hitherto been contented with the aſſiſtance of a neighbouring prieſt by way of preceptor. But, as he was our only ſon, we were deſirous that he ſhould obtain every advantage of education. We were neither of us illiterate; but, in the courſe of twenty-three years, which had elapſed ſince I was myſelf of Charles's age, the progreſs of literature and the literary paſſion in Europe had been aſtoniſhingly great, and I was anxious that he ſhould realiſe in his own perſon every benefit which the fortunate and illuſtrious period of human affairs in which he began to exiſt, ſeemed to hold out to him. Beſide, there was an impetuoſity and forwardneſs in his character, that ſeemed ill to brook the profound ſolitude and retirement in which his mother and I were contented to live. His caſe ſeemed to demand companions of his own age, a little world of fellow beings, with whom he might engage in their petty buſineſs and cares, with whoſe paſſions his own might joſtle or might ſympathiſe, who might kindle his emulation, and open to him the field of fraternal aſſociations and amity.

There was however a conſiderable difficulty attendant on this queſtion. The ſchools of real literature in France, where languages were properly taught, and ſcience might be acquired, were at this time exceedingly few. The neareſt univerſity

verſity was that of Toulouſe, at the diſtance of twenty-ſix leagues. This was, practically ſpeaking, as far from us as Paris itſelf. Was then our darling child, to be torn from his parents, from all he was accuſtomed to ſee, and all by whom he was loved, to be planted in the midſt of ſtrangers, and to have his mind excited to obſervation, and the ſpirit of generous contention rouſed, at the riſque of ſuppreſſing the tender affections of his ſoul, and the ſentiments of duty, reliance and love? There ſeemed however to be no alternative. It was neceſſary that a temporary ſeparation ſhould take place. Intellectual improvement was a point by all means to be purſued; and we muſt direct our efforts to keep alive along with it, thoſe winning qualities, and that ſoftneſs of heart, which had hitherto rendered him ſo eminently our delight. Such were our fond ſpeculations aud projects for the future.

It was at length determined that I ſhould proceed along with him to Paris. I could there obſerve upon the ſpot the ſtate of the univerſity, and the means of learning that exiſted in the metropolis; and could conſult with ſome of thoſe eminent luminaries with whom I had become acquainted at the houſe of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite declined accompanying me upon this occaſion. Her father was dead; ſhe could not think of quitting her daughters for any conſiderable time; and our nuptial engagement of reſiding always in the country, gave her a repugnance to the removing with her whole family to Paris. It was leſt probable that ſhe might come to me when the buſineſs was ſettled, if at that time it was determined to leave her ſon at the capital; and

and that ſhe might then reconduct me to the place, which had been the ſcene of all my happineſs, but which I was deſtined never to reviſit in peace.

Preliminaries being at length fully adjuſted in the manner that appeared ſuitable to the importance of the occaſion, I ſet off for the metropolis of my country, which I had ſeen only once, and that for a very ſhort period, in the courſe of ten years. That viſit had been produced by a very melancholy circumſtance, the death of the marquis of Damville. Marguerite and myſelf had then been ſummoned, and arrived at his hotel but a few days before he expired. Though extremely weakened by the mortal diſeaſe under which he laboured, he retained all the faculties of his mind, and converſed with us in the moſt affectionate and endearing terms. He congratulated us upon our mutual felicity; nor could the ſituation in which we found him, upon the brink of an everlaſting oblivion of all earthly things, abate the ſincerity and fervour of his delight. He thanked me for my carriage and conduct as a huſband, which, he ſaid, might with propriety be held up as a model to the human ſpecies. He applauded himſelf for that mingled diſcernment and determination, which, as he affirmed, had ſo opportunely ſecured my virtue and his daughter's happineſs. He truſted that I was now ſufficiently weaned from thoſe habits which had formerly given him ſo much alarm. At the ſame time he conjured me, by every motive that an overflowing enthuſiaſm could ſuggeſt, to perſiſt in my good reſolutions, and never to change that reſidence, where I had found every degree of delight of which the human mind is in its preſent condition ſuſceptible. Do not, ſaid he, be drawn aſide by ambition;

ambition; do not be dazzled by the glitter of idle pomp and decoration; do not enter the remoteſt circle of the vortex of diſſipation! Live in the midſt of your family; cultivate domeſtic affections; be the ſolace and joy of your wife; watch for the preſent and future welfare of your children; and be aſſured that you will then be found no contemptible or unbeneficial member of the community at large!

Such were the laſt advices of the marquis of Damville. Excellent man! how ill were your leſſons remembered! how ill your kindneſs remunerated! He died in the ſixth year of our marriage. The ſerious impreſſion which this event produced in my mind, gave me ſmall inclination to enter into any ſpecies of ſociety, and diſpoſed me to quit Paris as ſoon as every reſpect had been paid to the obſequies of the deceaſed.

Upon my arrival in the metropolis on the preſent occaſion, I immediately ſought to renew my acquaintance with thoſe amiable and eminent perſons, who had for the moſt part conſtituted the circle of the marquis of Damville. They received me with that intereſt and attention, that I have uſually found attendant on a cultivated mind. The pleaſure was conſiderable, that reſulted from meeting them thus again, after ten years ceſſation of intercourſe. A few of them indeed were dead, and others diſperſed by various accidents in different parts of France or of Europe. The greater part however I ſtill found in the celebrated city, which might well be conſidered as the metropolis of the civilized world. The king had early been diſtinguiſhed by his love of letters and the arts; and added years, while they abated in his mind the eagerneſs of ambition and glory, gave new ſtrength to his

more

more cultivated propenſities. The liberality of his conduct, and the poliſhed eaſe that characteriſed his manners, produced a general predilection in favour of the capital in which he reſided.

I found all my former friends matured and improved by the ſilent influence of time. Their knowledge was increaſed; their views rendered wider; their converſation was more amuſing and inſtructive, their manners more bland and unaffected. But, if their characters had experienced revolution, mine was more materially changed. I had before encountered them with all the heat and preſumption of youth, with no views ſo much preſent to my mind as thoſe of chivalry and a factitious honour, with no experience but that of a camp. I was impetuous, volatile and diſſipated. I had not reſted long enough upon any one of the flowers of intellect to extract its honey; and my mind was kept in a ſtate of preternatural agitation by the paſſions of a gameſter. It was now become cool, moderated and tranquil. The ſociety of Marguerite had contributed much to the improvement of my character; I had lived in no idle and brutiſh ſolitude, but in the midſt of contemplation and letters; and I had the paſſions of a huſband and a father, in the extremeſt degree attached to his family. Theſe paſſions will be found perhaps to be the true ſchool of humanity: the man, whoſe ſituation continually exerciſes in him the ſofteſt and moſt amiable charaties of our nature, will almoſt infallibly ſurpaſs his brethren in kindneſs to ſympathiſe with, and promptneſs to relieve, the diſtreſſes of others.

Will it be accounted ſtrange that, in Paris, ſurrounded by perſons of various knowledge and liberal benevolence, I found myſelf under the influence of other feelings than any I had lately

experienced? I was like a man who had ſuffered long calamity in a famiſhed veſſel or a town beſieged, and is immediately after introduced into the midſt of luxury, to a table loaded with the moſt coſtly dainties. Every viand has to his apprehenſion an exquiſite reliſh, and every wine a delicious flavour, that he never perceived in them before. Let no one from hence infer that my love for Marguerite was diminiſhed; it has already ſufficiently appeared in the courſe of my narrative, that no happineſs could be more conſummate than mine was with this admirable woman. Had I been called upon to chooſe for the ſeat of my future life, between my paternal chateau in the Bordelois with Marguerite to grace my abode, on the one hand, and all the gratification that Paris could afford on the other, I ſhould not have heſitated even for an inſtant. But the mind of man is made capacious of various pleaſures; and a perſon of ſound and uncorrupted judgment, will perhaps always enjoy with emotion the delights which for a long time before he had not encountered, however enviable his content may have been under their abſcence. I delighted to converſe with the men of genius and refinement with whom Paris at this time abounded. It was a feaſt of ſoul of which I had rarely partaken in my rural retreat. I delighted to combine excellence with number, and, to a conſiderable degree at leaſt, variety of intercourſe with ſentiments of regard and friendſhip. In theſe ſelect ſocieties I found no cold ſuppreſſions and reſerve. Their members were brethren in diſpoſition, ſimilar in their purſuits, and congenial in their ſentiments. When any one ſpoke, it was that the perſon to whom he addreſſed himſelf might apprehend what was paſſing in his thoughts. They participated with ſincerity

and

and a liberal mind in each other's feelings whether of gay delight or melancholy diſappointment.

Thus ſituated, I forgot for a time my engagements with Marguerite. The ſcenes of St. Leon, its fields, its walks, its woods and its ſtreams, faded from my mind. I forgot the pleaſure with which I had viewed my children ſporting on the green, and the delicious, rural ſuppers which I had ſo often partaken with my wife beneath my vines, and my fig-trees at the period of the ſetting-ſun. When I ſet out for Paris, theſe images had dwelt upon my mind, and ſaddened my fancy. At every ſtage I felt myſelf removed ſtill further from the ſcene where my treaſures and my affections were depoſited. But, ſhortly after, new ſcenes and new employments engaged my thoughts. The pleaſures which I ſought but weakly at firſt, every time they were taſted increaſed my partiality for them. I ſeemed for a time to be under the influence of an oblivion of my former life. Thus circumſtanced, the folly which had ſo deep a root in my character took hold of me. I hired a magnificent hotel, and entertained at my own expence thoſe perſons in whoſe ſociety I principally delighted. My circles became more numerous than thoſe of the marquis of Damville, and were conducted in a very different ſtyle of ſplendour and profuſion. I correſponded with Marguerite; but I continually found ſome new pretext for lengthening my ſtay; and ſhe on her part, though the kindeſt and moſt indulgent of women, became ſeriouſly alarmed and unhappy.

As my parties were more numerous than thoſe of the marquis of Damville had been, they were more mixed. Among others I occaſionally aſſociated myſelf with ſome of thoſe noblemen who had been the companions of my former diſſipation

and gaming. An obvious conſequence reſulted from this. Parties of play were occaſionally propoſed to me. I reſiſted—I yielded. My firſt compliances were timid, heſitating and painful. I recollected the leſſons and exhortations of my excellent father-in-law. At length however my alarms abated. I reproached myſelf with the want of an honourable confidence in my own firmneſs, and the cowardice of ſuppoſing that I was not to be truſted with the direction of my conduct.

One evening I ventured beyond the cautious limits I had at firſt preſcribed myſelf, and won a conſiderable ſum. This incident produced a ſtrong impreſſion upon me, and filled my mind with tumult and agitation. There was a ſecret that I had concealed almoſt from myſelf, but which now recurred to me with tenfold violence. I was living beyond the means I had to diſcharge my expences. My propenſity of this ſort ſeemed to be fatal and irreſiſtible. My marriage with Marguerite had occurred opportunely, to heal the breaches that I had at that time made in my fortune, and to take from me the conſciouſneſs of embaraſſments which I ſhould otherwiſe have deeply felt. The death of the marquis, however deplorable in other reſpects, happened at a period when the ſpirit of profuſion and magnificence which characteriſed me, had again involved my affairs in conſiderable diffieulty. It might have been ſuppoſed that theſe two caſes of experience would ſuffice to extirpate my folly. But they had rather the contrary effect. In each of them the event was ſuch, as to prevent extravagance and thoughtleſſneſs from producing their genuine reſults; and of conſequence they appeared leſs criminal and miſchievous in my eyes, than otherwiſe they probably would have appeared. I rather increaſed than diminiſhed my eſtabliſhment upon the

the death of my father-in-law. I had no reaſonable proſpect of any property hereafter to deſcend to me, that ſhould exonerate me from the conſequences of further prodigality. But I did not advert to this. I ſaw myſelf ſurrounded by my children; they were the delight and ſolace of my life; and yet I was heedleſs of their intereſts. Sometimes I reſolved upon a more rigid economy. But economy is a principle that does not eaſily lay hold of any but a heart framed to receive it. It is a buſineſs of attentive and vigilant detail. It eaſily eſcapes the mind, amidſt the impetuoſity of the paſſions, the obſtinacy of rooted propenſities, and the ſeduction of long eſtabliſhed habits. Marguerite indeed did not ſhare with me in theſe follies; the ſimplicity and ingenuouſneſs of her mind were ſuch, that ſhe would have been as happy in a cottage as a palace; but, though ſhe did not partake my vices, an ill-judged forbearance and tenderneſs for my feelings, did not permit her effectually to counteract them. This is perhaps the only defect of character I am able to impute to her.

After I had won the ſum to which I have alluded, I retired to my hotel full of anxious thoughts. It produced upon me in ſome degree the ſame effect as ordinarily belongs to a great calamity. I lay all night ſleepleſs and diſturbed. Ruin and deſpair preſented themſelves to my mind in a thouſand forms. Heedleſs prodigality and dilapidated revenues paſſed in review before me. I counted the years of my life. I had completed the thirty-ſecond year of my age. This was ſcarcely half the probable duration of human exiſtence. How was I to ſupport the remaining period, a period little aſſorted to difficulties and expedients, and which, in the cloſe of it, ſeems imperiouſly to call for every indulgence?

gence? Hitherto an interval of four or five years had repeatedly ſufficed to involve me in ſerious embarraſſment. My children were growing up around me; my family was likely to become ſtill larger; as my offspring increaſed in years, their demands upon my revenues would be more conſiderable. Were theſe demands to be ſlighted? Were my daughters, nay, was the heir of my rank and my name, to be committed to the compaſſion of the world, unprovided and forlorn? What a cheerleſs proſpect? What a gloomy and diſconſolate hue did theſe ideas ſpread upon that future, which the health of the human mind requires to have gilded with the beams of hope and expectation? I had already tried the expedient of economy, and I had uniformly found this ineſtimable and only ſheet-anchor of prudence gliding from my deluded graſp. Could I promiſe myſelf better ſucceſs in future? There ſeemed to be ſomething in my habits, whether of inattention, oſtentation or inconſiſtency, that baffled the ſtrongeſt motives by which parſimony and frugality can poſſibly be enforced.

Why did theſe thoughts importunely recur to me in the preſent moment? They were the ſuggeſtions of a malignant genius, thoughts, the deſtination of which was to lead me into a gulph of miſery and guilt! While I was going on in a regular train of expence, while I was ſcooping the mine that was to ſwallow me and my hopes together, I had the art to keep theſe reflections at bay. Now that I had met with an unexpected piece of good fortune, they ruſhed upon me with irreſiſtible violence. Unfortunate coincidence! Miſerable,—rather let me ſay, guilty, abandoned miſcreant!

As

As ſoon as I roſe in the morning, I went to the cloſet where, the evening before, I had depoſited my recent acquiſitions. I ſpread out the gold before me. I gazed upon it with intentneſs. My eyes, a moment after, rolled in vacancy. I traverſed the apartment with impatient ſteps. All the demon ſeemed to make his deſcent upon my ſoul. This was the firſt time that I had ever felt the ſtruggle of conſcious guilt and diſhonour. I was far indeed from anticipating that ſpecies of guilt, and that ſpecies of ruin, which ſoon after overwhelmed me. My mind did not once recur to the poſſibility of any ſerious miſchief. I dwelt only, as gameſters perhaps uſually do, upon the alternative between acquiſition and no acquiſition. I did not take into the account the ungovernableneſs of my own paſſions. I aſſumed it as unqueſtionable, that I could ſtop when I pleaſed. The thoughts that tortured me were, in the firſt place, thoſe of a ſanguine and unexperienced adventurer in a lottery, whoſe mind reſts not for a moment upon the ſum he has riſqued, but who, having in fancy the principal prize already in his poſſeſſion, and having diſtributed it to various objects and purpoſes, ſometimes fearfully recurs to the poſſibility of his diſappointment, and anticipates with terror what will be his ſituation, if deprived of this imaginary wealth. I had now for the firſt time opened my eyes to the real ſtate of my affairs, and I clung with proportionable vehemence to this plank which was to bear me from the ſtorm. In the ſecond place, I felt, though darkly and unwillingly, the immorality of my conception. To game may, in ſome inſtances, not be in diametrical oppoſition to liberality of mind; but he who games for the expreſs purpoſe of improving his circumſtances, muſt be an idiot, if he does not ſometimes recollect that

that the money loſt may be as ſerious a miſchief to his neighbour, as the money gained can poſſibly be a benefit to himſelf. It is paſt a queſtion, that he who thus turns his amuſement into his buſineſs, loſes the dignity of a man of honour, and puts himſelf upon a level with the moſt avaricious and uſurious merchant.

Though I was far from having digeſted a ſpecific plan of enriching myſelf by theſe diſcreditable means, yet the very tumult of my thoughts operated ſtrongly to lead me once more to the gaming table. I was in no humour to buſy myſelf with my own thoughts; the calmneſs of literary diſcuſſion, and the poliſhed interchange of wit, which had lately ſo much delighted me, had now no attraction for my heart; the turbulence of a ſcene of high play alone had power to diſtract my attention from the ſtorm within. I won a ſecond time. I felt the rapidity and intenſeneſs of my contemplations ſtill further accelerated. I will not over again detail what they were. Suffice it to ſay, that my hopes became more ardent, my conception of the neceſſity of this reſource more impreſſive, and my alarm leſt this laſt expedient ſhould fail me more tormenting.

The next time I loſt half as much as the ſum of my winnings. I then proceeded for ſeveral days in a nearly regular alternation of gain and loſs. This, as ſoon as the fact unavoidably forced itſelf upon my mind, only ſerved to render my thoughts more deſperate. No, exclaimed I, it was not for this that I entered upon ſo tormenting a purſuit. It was not for this that I deſerted the learned ſocieties which were lately my delight, and committed myſelf to a ſea of diſquiet and anxiety. I came not here like a boy for amuſement; or, like one who has been bred in the lap

of

of ignorance and weaith, to ſeek a relief from the burthen of exiſtence, and to find a ſtimulus to animate my torpid ſpirits. Am I then to be for ever b ffled? Am I to cultivate a tract of land, which is to preſent me nothing in return but unvaried barrenneſs? Am I continually to wind up my paſſions, and new-ſtring my attention in vain? Am I a mere inſtrument t be played upo by endleſs hopes and fears and tormenting wiſhes? Am I to be the ſport of events, the fool of promiſe, always agitated with near-approaching good, yet always deluded?

This frame of mind led me on inſenſibly to the moſt extravagant adventures. It threw me in the firſt place into the hands of notorious gamblers. Men of real property ſhrunk from the ſtakes I propoſed, as, though they were in ſome degree infected with the venom of gaming, their infection was not ſo deep as mine, nor with my deſperation of thought. The players with whom I engaged, were for the moſt part well known to every one but myſelf, not to be able to pay the ſums they played for, if they loſt; nay, this fact might be ſaid in ſome ſenſe to be known to me as well as the reſt, though I obſtinately ſteeled myſelf againſt the recollection of it. One evening, I won of one of theſe perſons a very large ſum, for which I ſuffered him to play with me upon honour. The conſequence was ſimple. The next morning he took his departure from Paris, and I heard of him no more.

Before this however the tide of ſucceſs had ſet ſtrongly againſt me. I had ſuſtained ſome ſerious viciſſitudes; and, while I was playing with the wretch I have juſt mentioned, my eagerneſs increaſed as my good luck began, and I flattered myſelf that I ſhould now avenge myſelf of for-

tune for ſome of her late unkindneſſes. My anguiſh,--why ſhould I call the thing by a diſproportionate and trivial appellation?—my agony —was by ſo much the greater, when I found that this perſon, the very individual who had already ſtripped me of conſiderable ſums, had diſappeared, and left me without the ſmalleſt benefit from my imaginary winnings.

No man who has not felt, can poſſibly image to himſelf the tortures of a gameſter, of a gameſter like me, who played for the improvement of my fortune, who played with the recollection of a wife and children dearer to me than the blood that bubbled through the arteries of my heart, who might be ſaid, like the Aſiatic ſavage, to make theſe relations the ſtake for which I threw, who ſaw all my own happineſs and all theirs through the long viſto of life, depending on the turn of a card! Hell is but the chimera of prieſts, to bubble idiots and cowards. What have they invented, to come into competition with what I felt. Their alternative interchange of flames and ice, is but a feeble image of the eternal varieties of hope and fear. All bodily racks and torments are nothing compared with certain ſtates of the human mind. The gameſter would be the moſt pitiable, if he were not the moſt deſpicable, creature that exiſts. Arrange ten bits of painted paper in a certain order, and he is ready to go wild with the extravagance of his joy. He is only reſtrained by ſome remains of ſhame from dancing about the room, and diſplaying the vileneſs of his ſpirit by every ſort of freak and abſurdity. At another time, when his hopes have been gradually worked up into a paroxyſm, an unexpected turn arrives, and he is made the moſt miſerable of men.

Never

Never ſhall I ceaſe to recollect the ſenſation I have repeatedly felt, in the inſtantaneous ſinking of the ſpirits, the conſcious fire that ſpread over my viſage, the anger in my eye, the burning dryneſs of my throat, the ſentiment that in a moment was ready to overwhelm with curſes the cards, the ſtake, my own exiſtence and all mankind. How every malignant and inſufferable paſſion ſeemed to ruſh upon my ſoul! What nights of dreadful ſolitude and deſpair did I repeatedly paſs during the progreſs of my ruin! It was the night of the ſoul! My mind was wrapped in a gloom that could not be pierced! My heart was oppreſſed with a weight, that no power, human or divine, was equal to remove! My eyelids ſeemed to preſs downward with an invincible burthen! My eyeballs were ready to ſtart and crack their ſockets! I lay motionleſs the victim of ineffable horror! The whole endleſs night ſeemed to be filled with one vaſt, appalling, immoveable idea! It was a ſtupour, more inſupportable and tremendous, than the utmoſt whirl of pain, or the fierceſt agony of exquiſite perception!

One day that my mind was in a ſtate of exceſſive anguiſh and remorſe (I had already contrived by this infernal means to diſpoſſeſs myſelf of the half of my property) my ſon came unexpectedly into my chamber. For ſome time I had ſcarcely ever ſeen him: ſuch is a gameſter! All the night, while he ſlept, I was engaged in theſe haunts of demons. All the day, while he was awake, and ſtudying with his maſters, or amuſing himſelf, I was in my bed-chamber, endeavouring to court a few broken hours of ſleep. When, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of our habits, I had the opportunity of ſeeing him, I rather ſhunned to uſe, than ſought to embrace it. The ſight of him had a ſavour of bitterneſs

bitterneſs in it, that more than balanced all the ſolace of natural affection. It brought before me the image of his mother and his ſiſters; it preſented to my ſoul a frightful tale of deſerted duties; it was more galling and envenomed than the ſting of ſcorpions.

Starting at the ſound of the opening door, I called out abruptly and with ſome harſhneſs, Who is there? What do you want?

It is I, Sir, replied the boy; it is Charles; come to pay his duty to you!

I do not want you now; you ſhould not come but when you know I am at leiſure; anſwered I ſomewhat diſturbed.

Very well, Sir; very well: I am going. As he ſpoke, his voice ſeemed ſuffocated with tears. He was on the point of ſhutting the door, and leaving me to myſelf.

Charles! ſaid I, not well knowing what it was I intended to do.

He returned.

Come here, my dear boy!

I took his hand, I drew him between my knees, I hid my face in his neck, I ſhook with the violence of my emotion.

Go, go, boy: you perceive I cannot talk to you.

I puſhed him gently from me.

Papa! cried he, I do not like to leave you. I know I am but a boy, and can be but of little uſe to you. If mamma were with you, I would not be troubleſome. I ſhould cry, when I ſaw you were grieved, but I would aſk no queſtions, and would leave you, becauſe you deſired it. I hope you have not had any bad news?

No, my boy, no. Come to me to-morrow, and I will be at leiſure, and will talk a great deal to you.

Ah,

Ah, papa, to-morrow! Every day that I did not ſee you, I thought it would be to-morrow! And there was one to-morrow, and another to-morrow, and ſo many, that it ſeemed as if you had forgotten to ſpeak to me at all.

Why, Charles, you do not doubt my word? I tell you, that to-morrow you ſhall ſee me as long as you pleaſe.

Well, well, I will wait! But do then let it be all day! I will not go to college, and it ſhall be a holiday. Papa, I do not like my leſſons half ſo well as I did, ſince I have neither you nor mamma that I can tell what they are about.

Good bye, Charles! Be a good boy! remember to-morrow! Good bye!

Papa, now I am ſure you look a good deal better than you did at firſt. Let me tell you ſomething about the leſſon I read this morning. It was a ſtory of Zaleucus the Locrian, who put out one of his own eyes, that he might preſerve eye-ſight to his ſon.

This artleſs ſtory, thus innocently introduced, cut me to the ſoul. I ſtarted in my chair, and hid my face upon the table.

Papa, what is the matter? Indeed you frighten me!

Zaleucus was a father! What then am I?

Yes, Zaleucus was very good indeed! But, do you know, his ſon was very naughty. It was his diſobedience and wickedneſs, that made him liable to ſuch a puniſhment. I would not for the world be like Zaleucus's ſon. I hope, papa, you will never ſuffer from my wilfulneſs. You ſhall not, papa, indeed, indeed!

I caught the boy in my arms. No, you are very good! you are too good! I cannot bear it!

Well,

Well, papa, I wiſh I were able to ſhow you that I love you, as well as ever Zaleucus loved his ſon!

I was melted with the ingenuouſneſs of the boy's expreſſion. I quitted him. I paced up and down the room. Suddenly, as if by a paroxyſm of inſanity, I ſeized my child by the arm, I ſeated myſelf, I drew him towards me, I put my eye upon him.

Boy, how dare you talk to me of Zaleucus? Do you mean to inſinuate a reproach? Do I not diſcharge a father's duty? If I do not, know, urchin, I will not be inſulted by my child!

The boy was aſtoniſhed. He burſt into tears, and was ſilent.

I was moved by his evident diſtreſs. No, child, you have no father. I am afraid you have not Yo do not know my baſeneſs. You do not know that I am the deadlieſt foe you have in the world.

Dear papa, do not talk thus! Do not I know that you are the beſt of men? Do not I love you and mamma better than every body elſe put together?

Well, Charles, cried I, endeavouring to compoſe myſelf, we will talk no more now. Did not I tell you, you ſhould not come to me, but when you knew it was a proper time? I hope you will never have reaſon to hate me.

I never will hate you, papa, do to me what you will!

He ſaw I wiſhed to be alone, and left me.

CHAP. VI.

IN the evening of the ſame day, my beloved Marguerite arrived unexpectedly at Paris. In the beginning

beginning of our ſeparation, I had been to the laſt degree punctual in my letters. I had no pleaſure ſo great, as retiring to my cloſet, and pouring out my ſoul to the moſt adorable of women. By degrees I relaxed in punctuality. Ordinary occupations, however cloſely purſued, have a method in them, that eaſily combines with regularity in points of an incidental nature. But gaming, when purſued with avidity, ſubverts all order, and forces every avocation from the place aſſigned it. When my inſane project of ſupplying the inadequateneſs of my fortune by this expedient began to produce an effect exactly oppoſite, I could not, but with the extremeſt difficulty, ſtring my mind to write to the miſtreſs of my ſoul. I endeavoured not to think, with diſtinctneſs and attention, of the perſons whoſe happineſs was moſt nearly involved with mine. I ſaid to myſelf, Yet another venture muſt be tried; fortune ſhall change the animoſity with which ſhe has lately purſued me; I will repair the breaches that have been ſuſtained; and I ſhall then return with tenfold avidity to ſubjects that at preſent I dare not fix my mind upon. My letters were accordingly ſhort, unfrequent and unſatisfactory; and thoſe of Marguerite diſcovered increaſing anguiſh, perturbation and anxiety. What a change in the minds of both had the lapſe of a few months produced! Not that my attachment had ſuffered the diminution of a ſingle particle; but that attachment which had lately been the ſource of our mutual felicity, was now fraught only with diſtreſs. My mind was filled with horrors; and Marguerite expected from me an encouragement and conſolation in abſence, which, alas, I had it not in my power to give!

I had now continued in Paris for a time vaſtly greater than I had originally propoſed. After having

ing

ing remained more than ten days without receiving one word of intelligence, a letter of mine was delivered to Marguerite, more ſhort, myſterious and diſtreſſing to her feelings, than any that had preceded. The ten days ſilence, from me who at firſt had never miſſed an opportunity of pouring out my ſoul to her, and contributing to her pleaſure, was exquiſitely painful. There is ſcarcely any thing that produces ſuch a ſickneſs of the heart, as the repeated prorogation of hope. But, when the letter arrived that had been ſo anxiouſly looked for, when the hand-writing of the ſuperſcription was recogniſed, when the letter was treaſured up for the impatiently deſired moment of ſolitude, that the ſacred emotions of the heart might ſuffer no interruption, and when it at laſt appeared ſo cold, ſo ominous, ſo withering to the buds of affection, the determination of Marguerite was ſpeedily formed. The relations that bound us together were of too mighty a value, to be diſpenſed or to be trifled with. She felt them as the very cords of exiſtence. For ten years ſhe had known no ſolace that was diſconnected from my idea, no care but of our own happineſs and that of our offspring. Benevolent ſhe was almoſt beyond human example, and intereſted for the welfare of all ſhe knew; but theſe were brief and mutable concerns; they were not incorporated with the ſtamina of her exiſtence. I was the whole world to her; ſhe had no idea of ſatisfaction without me. Her firmneſs had been ſufficiently tried by the interpoſal of ſeparation and abſence. How was ſhe to interpret the obſcurity that had now ariſen? Had I forgotten my family and my wife? Had I been corrupted and debauched by that Paris, the effects of which upon my character her father had ſo deeply apprehended? Had I, in contempt of every thing ſacred,

entered

entered into ſome new attachment? Had the attractions of ſome new beauty in the metropolis, made me indifferent to the virtue of my children, and the life of their mother? Perhaps the length of our attachment had infected me with fatiety, and the inconſtancy of my temper had been touſed by the charms of novelty. Perhaps the certainty of her kindneſs and regard had no longer allurements for me; and I might be excited to the purſuit of another by the pleaſures of hope combined with uncertainty, and of a coyneſs, that ſeemed to promiſe compliance hereafter, even while it pronounced a preſent denial. Theſe were the images that haunted her mind; they engendered all the wildneſs, and all the torments, of a delirious paroxyſm; ſhe reſolved that no time ſhould be ſacrificed to needleſs uncertainty, and that no effort of hers ſhould be unexerted to prevent the miſchief ſhe feared.

It was evening when ſhe arrived. I was upon the point of repairing to that ſcene of nightly reſort, the ſource of all my guilt and all my miſeries. I enquired of my ſon's valet, where he was, and how he had been in the courſe of the day. He was gone to bed: he had appeared unuſually ſad, ſometimes in tears; and, while he was undreſſing, had ſighed deeply two or three times. While I was collecting this account in my own apartment, the gates of the hotel opened, and a number of horſemen entered the court-yard. I was ſomewhat ſurpriſed; becauſe, though I was accuſtomed to ſee much company, few of my acquaintance viſited me at ſo late an hour, except on the evenings appropriated to receive them. I croſſed the ſaloon to enquire. One of the ſervants exclaimed, It is Bernardin's voice; it muſt be my miſtreſs that is come!

Nothing

Nothing could be further from my mind than the thought of her arrival. I flew through the paſſage; I was on the ſpot, at the moment that the ſervant prepared to conduct his miſtreſs from the litter: I received Marguerite in my arms, and led her into the houſe. If I had expected her arrival, I ſhould infallibly have met her at this moment with anxiety and confuſion; I ſhould have gone round the circle of my thoughts, and ſhould not have had confidence to encounter the beam of her eye. But the event was ſo unexpected as to drive all other ideas from my mind; and, in conſequence, I enjoyed ſeveral minutes,—ages, rather let me ſay,—of the ſincereſt tranſport. I kiſſed the miſtreſs of my ſoul with ecſtſy; I gazed upon all her well known lineaments and features; I liſtened to the pleaſing melody of her voice; I was intoxicated with delight. Upon occaſions like this, it ſeems as if every former joy that had marked the various periods of intercourſe, diſtilled its very ſpirit and eſſence, to compoſe a draught, ten times more delicious and refined than had ever before been taſted. Our meeting was like awaking from the dead; it was the emancipation of the weary captive, who exchanges the dungeon's gloom for the luſtre of the morning, and who feels a celeſtial exhilaration of heart, the very memory of which had been inſenſibly wearing away from his treacherous brain. All my ſenſes partook of the rapture. Marguerite ſeemed to ſhed ambroſial odours round her; her touch was thrilling; her lips were nectar; her figure was like that of a deſcended deity!

Her pleaſure was not leſs than mine. It is indeed abſurd, it may be termed profanation, to talk of ſolitary pleaſure. No ſenſation ordinarily diſtinguiſhed by that epithet, can endure the teſt of a moment's

a moment's inſpection, when compared with a ſocial enjoyment. It is then only that a man is truly pleaſed, when pulſe replies to pulſe, when the eyes diſcourſe eloquently to each other, when in reſponſive tones and words the ſoul is communicated. Pleaſure, in ſuch examples, conſiſts in this, the unaccuſtomed perception that exiſtence has gained a duplication of itſelf (for, in ſuch examples, the two beings become one), the ſelf-approbation that accompanies our unbounded deſire for the gratification of another, the ſelf-complacence that reſults from the diſtinguiſhing preference beſtowed upon us, the harmony of ſentiment, and union of ſoul. Altogether, we are conſcious of a ſober, a chaſte and a dignified intoxication, an elevation of ſpirit, that does not bereave the mind of itſelf, and that endures long enough for us to analyſe and favour the cauſes of our joy.

For ſome time we reſted on a ſopha, each filled and occupied with the obſervation of the other. My eyes aſſured Marguerite of the conſtancy of my affection; my kiſſes were thoſe of chaſte, undivided, entire attachment. Our works were inſignificant and idle, the broken and incoherent phraſes of a happineſs that could not be ſilent. At length Marguerite exclaimed, It is enough; my fears are vaniſhed; I have no queſtions to aſk, no doubts to remove. Yet why, my Reginald, did you ſuffer thoſe doubts to gather, thoſe fears to accumulate? Surely you knew the ſingleneſs of my affection! How many painful days and hours might you have ſaved me, almoſt by a word!

Forgive me, my love! replied I. Waſte not the golden hour of meeting in recrimination! Feeling, as your angelic goodneſs now makes me feel, I wonder at myſelf, that I could for one moment have conſented to ſeparation; that I could have thought

thought any thing but this, exiſtence; or that, having experienced the joys that you have beſtowed, I could loſe all image of the paſt, and, dwelling in a deſert, imagine it paradiſe!

Recrimination! rejoined Marguerite. No, my love; you make me too happy, to leave room for any thing but gratitude and affection! Forgive me, Reginald, if I pretend that, in meeting you thus, I find myſelf your ſuperior in happineſs and love. You only awake from lethargy, forgetfulneſs of yourſelf and—of me; but I awake from anguiſh, a ſeparation, that I deſired not at firſt, and of which I hourly wiſhed to ſee an end, from doubts that would intrude, and refuſed to be expelled, from the inceſſant contemplation and regret of a felicity, once poſſeſſed, but poſſeſſed no longer! Melancholy ideas, gloomy prognoſtics, overſpread my ſleepleſs nights, and bedewed my pillow with tears! This it is, that, at laſt, has driven me away from my family and daughters, reſolved to obtain the certainty of deſpair, or the diſperſion of my fears! Have I known all this, and think you that I do not enjoy with rapture this bliſsful moment?

While we were thus converſing, Charles entered the room. He was not yet aſleep when his mother arrived; he heard her voice; and haſtened to put on his clothes, that he might ruſh into her arms. The pleaſure Marguerite had conceived from our meeting, and the affectionate ſerenity that had taken poſſeſſion of her ſoul, infuſed double ardour into the embraces ſhe beſtowed on her ſon. He gazed earneſtly in her face; he kiſſed her with fervency; but was ſilent.

Why, Charles! ſaid ſhe, what is the matter with you? Are not you glad to ſee me?

Tha I am, mamma! So glad, that I do not know what

what to do with myſelf! I was afraid I never ſhould have been glad aagin!

Pooh, boy! what do you mean? You were not mother-ſick, were you?

Yes, indeed, I was ſick, ſick at heart! Not that I am a coward! I think that I could have been ſatisfied to have been without either my father or you for a little while. But papa is ſo altered, you cannot think! He never ſmiles and looks happy; and, when I ſee him, inſtead of making me joyful, as it uſed to do, it makes me ſad!

Dear Reginald! replied the mother, looking at me; is it poſſible, that, while my heart was haunted with fear and ſuſpicions, ſeparation alone ſhould have had ſuch an effect on you?

I dare ſay it was that! interpoſed the boy. I could not make papa ſmile, all I could do: but, now you are come, he will ſoon be well! How much he muſt love you, mamma?

The artleſs prattle of my ſon ſtruck anguiſh to my ſoul, and awakened a whole train of tormenting thoughts. Alas! thought I, can it indeed be love, that thus contrives againſt the peace of its object? Would to God, my child! that my thoughts were as ſimple and pure as thy innocent boſom!

And yet, added the boy, as if recollecting himſelf, if he could not ſee you, ſure that was no reaſon for him to avoid me? He ſeemed to be as much afraid of me, as I have ſeen ſome of my play-fellows of a ſnake! Indeed, mamma, it was a ſad thing that, when I wanted him to kiſs me and preſs me to his boſom, he ſeemed to ſhrink away from me! There now! it was juſt ſo, as he looks now, that papa uſed to frown on me, I cannot tell how often! Now is not that ugly, mamma?

I could no longer govern the tumult of my thoughts.

thoughts. Peace, urchin! cried I. Why did you come to mar the tranſport of our meeting? Juſt now, Marguerite, I forgot myſelf, and was happy! Now all the villain riſes in my ſoul!

My wife was ſo aſtoniſhed at the perturbation of my manner, and at the words I uttered, that ſhe was ſcarcely able to articulate. Reginald! in broken accents ſhe exclaimed—my love!—my huſband!

No matter! ſaid I. It ſhall yet be well! My heart aſſures me, it ſhall! Be not diſturbed, my love! I will never cauſe you a moment's anguiſh! I would ſooner die a thouſand deaths!—Forget the odious thoughts that poor Charles has excited in me ſo unſeaſonably! They were mere idle words! Depend upon it they were!

While I was ſpeaking, Marguerite hid her face upon the ſopha. I took her hand, and by my careſſes endeavoured to ſoothe and compoſe her. At length, turning to me:

Reginald! ſaid ſhe, in a voice of anguiſh, Do you then endeavour to hide from me the real ſtate of your thoughts? Was the joy than attended our meeting, periſhable and deceitful? After ten years of unbounded affection and confidence, am I denied to be the partner of your boſom?

No, Marguerite, no! this was but the thought of a moment! By to-morrow's dawn it ſhall have no exiſtence in my boſom. Why ſhould I torment you with what ſo ſoon ſhall have no exiſtence to myſelf? Meanwhile, be aſſured, my love (inſtead of ſuffering diminution) is more full, more fervent and entire, than it ever was!

At this inſtant my mind experienced an extraordinary impreſſion. Inſtead of being weaned, by the preſence of this admirable woman, from my paſſion for gaming, it became ſtronger than ever.

If

If Charles had not entered at the critical moment he did, I ſhould have remained with Marguerite, and, amidſt the ſo long untaſted ſolace of love, have, at leaſt for this night, forgotten my cares. But that occurrence had overturned every thing, had laid naked the wounds of my boſom, and awakened conceptions that refuſed to be laid to ſleep again. The arms of my wife, that were about to embrace me, ſuddenly became to me a neſt of ſcorpions. I could as ſoon have reſted and enjoyed myſelf upon the top of Veſuvius, when it flamed. New as I was to this ſpecies of anguiſh, tranquilly and full of virtuous contentment as I had hitherto paſſed the years of my married ſtate, the pangs of a guilty conſcience I was wholly unable to bear. I roſe from my ſeat, and was upon the point of quitting the room.

Marquerite perceived by my manner that there was ſomething extraordinary paſſing in my mind. Where are you going,, Reginald ? ſaid ſhe.

I anſwered with a ſlight nod.—Not far, I replied, attempting an air of apathy and unconcern.

She was not ſatisfied. You are not going out ? She enquired.

I returned to where I had been ſitting. My love, I was going out at the moment of your arrival. It is neceſſary, I aſſure you. I hope I ſhall ſoon be back. I am ſorry I am obliged to leave you. Compoſe yourſelf. You are in want of reſt, and had better go to bed.

Stop, Reginald ! Afford me a minute's leiſure before you depart ! Leave us, Charles ! Good night, my dear boy ! Kiſs me ; remember that your mother is now in the ſame houſe with you ; and ſleep in peace.

The boy quitted the room.

Reginald ! ſaid the mother, I have no deſire to control

control your deſires, or be a ſpy upon your actions. But your conduct ſeems ſo extraordinary in this inſtance, as to diſpenſe me from the obſervation of common rules. I have always been a complying wife; I have never ſet myſelf in contradiction to your will; I appeal to yourſelf for the truth of this. I deſpiſe however thoſe delicacies, an adherence to which would entail upon us the ſacrifice of all that is moſt valuable in human life. Can I ſhut my ears upon the myſterious expreſſions which Charles's complaints have extorted from you? Can I be inſenſible to the extraordinary purpoſe you declare of leaving me, when I have yet been ſcarcely half an hour under the roof with you? Before Charles came in, you ſeem to have entertained no ſuch deſign.

My love, replied I, how ſeriouſly you comment upon the moſt inſignificant incident! Is it extraordinary that your unexpected arrival ſhould at firſt have made me forget an engagement that I now recollect?

St. Leon, anſwered my wife, before you indulge in ſurprize at my earneſtneſs, recollect the circumſtances that immediately preceded it. Through ſucceſſive weeks I have waited for ſome ſatisfactory and agreeable intelligence from you. I had a right before this to have expected your return. Uncertainty and a thouſand fearful apprehenſions have at length driven me from my home, and brought me to Paris. I am come here for ſatisfaction to my doubts, and peace to my anxious heart. Wonder not therefore, if you find ſomething more earneſt and determined in my proceedings now, than upon ordinary occaſions. Give me, I conjure you, give me eaſe and relief, if you are able! If not, at leaſt allow me this conſolation, to know the worſt!

Be

Be pacified, Marguerite! I rejoined. I am grieved. Heavens knows how deeply grieved, to have occaſioned you a moment's pain. But, ſince you lay ſo much ſtreſs upon this circumſtance, depend upon it, I will give up the buſineſs I was going about, and ſtay with you.

This conceſſion, voluntary and ſincere, produced an effect that I had not foreſeen. Marguerite gazed for a moment in my face, and then threw herſelf upon my neck.

Forgive me, my beloved huſband! ſhe cried. You indeed make me aſhamed of myſelf. I feel myſelf inexcuſable. I feel that I have been brooding over imaginary evils, and creating the miſery that corroded my heart. How inexpreſſibly you riſe my ſuperior! But I will conquer my weakneſs. I inſiſt upon your going to the engagement you have made, and will henceforth place the moſt entire confidence in your prudence and honor.

Every word of this ſpeech was a dagger to my heart. What were my feelings, while this admirable woman was taking ſhame to herſelf for her ſuſpicions, and pouring out her ſoul in commendation of my integrity! I looked inward, and found every thing there the reverſe of her apprehenſion, a ſcene of deſolation and remorſe. I embraced her in ſilence. My heart panted upon her boſom, and ſeemed burſting with a ſecret that it was death to reveal. I ought, in return to her generoſity, to have given up my feigned engagement, and devoted this night at leaſt to conſole and pacify her. But I could not, and I dared not. The wound of my boſom was opened, and would not be cloſed. The more I loved her for her confidence, the leſs I could endure myſelf in her preſence. To play the hypocrite for ſo many hours, to aſſume a face of tranquillity and joy, while all

within was tumult and horror, was a taſk too mighty for human powers to execute. I accepted of Marguerite's permiſſion, and left her. Even in the ſhort interval before I quitted the houſe, my carriage was near to betraying me. I could perceive her watchful of my countenance, as if again ſuſpicious that ſome fatal ſecret lurked in my mind. She ſaid nothing further upon the ſubject however, and I preſently eſcaped the inquiſition of her eye.

It is ſcarcely neceſſary to deſcribe the ſtate of my mind as I paſſed along the ſtreets. It is ſufficient to ſay that every thing I had felt before the paſſion of gaming, was trivial to the ſenſations that now occupied me. Now firſt it ſtood confeſſed before me, a demon that poiſoned all my joys, that changed the tranſport of a meeting with the adored of my ſoul into anguiſh, that drove me forth from her yet untaſted charms a ſolitary wanderer on the face of the earth. My buſy ſoul drew forth at length the picture of what this encounter would have been, if it had been ſanctified with the ſtamp of conſcious innocence. At one moment I felt myſelf the accurſed of mankind; I believed that he who could find, as I did, barrenneſs and blaſting in the choiceſt of heaven's bleſſings, muſt be miſerable beyond precedent or hope. Shortly after, however, I reviewed again the image of my poiſon, and found in it the promiſe of a cure. The more deſperate my caſe appeared to me, with the greater infanity of expectation did I aſſure myſelf that this one night ſhould retrieve all my misfortunes. In giving to it this deſtination indeed, I ſhould afflict the gentle boſom of my wife but too probably with ſome hours of uneaſineſs. But the event would richly repay her for ſo tranſitory a ſuffering. I would then open my whole mind to her. I would practiſe no more reſerves; I ſhould no longer be

driven

driven to the refuge of a vile hypocriſy. I would bid farewel to the frowns and the careſſes of fortune. I would require of her no further kindneſſes. If I were incapable myſelf of a rigid economy, I would commit implicitly to Marguerite the diſpoſal of my income, whom I knew to be every way qualified for the office. With theſe reflections I nerved my mind to the moſt deciſive adventures.

Why ſhould I enter into a long detail of the incidents of this criſis? Soon, though not immediately, I began to loſe conſiderable ſums. I brought with me in the firſt inſtance a penetrating eye, a collected mind, an intellect prepared for unintermitted exertion. Misfortune ſubverted all this. My eye grew wild, my ſoul tempeſtuous, my thoughts incoherent and diſtracted. I was incapable of any thing judicious; but I was determined to perſevere. I played till morning, nor could the light of morning induce me to deſiſt. The ſetting ſun of that day beheld me a beggar!

There is a degree of miſery, which, as it admits of no deſcription, ſo does it leave no diſtinct traces in the memory. It ſeems as if the weakneſs of the human mind alike incapacitated it to ſupport the delirium of joy, and the extremity of ſorrow. Of what immediately ſucceeded the period to which I have conducted my narrative, I have no recollection, but a horror beyond all names of horror, wild, inexplicable, unintelligible. Let no one however imagine that the temporary deſertion of the ſoul is any alleviation of its miſery. The mind that ſinks under its ſuffering, does not by that conduct ſhake off its burthen. Rather, ten thouſand times rather, would I endure all the calamities that have ever yet received a name, the ſenſations and hiſtory of which are capable of being delineated,

than ſuſtain that which has no words by which to expreſs itſelf, and the conception of which muſt be truſted ſolely to the faculties and ſympathy of the reader. Where is the cold inapprehenſive ſpirit that talks of madneſs as a refuge from ſorrow? Oh, dull and unconceiving beyond all belief! I cannot ſpeak of every ſpecies of madneſs; but I alſo have been mad! This I know, that there is a vacancy of ſoul, where all appears buried in ſtupidity, and ſcarcely deſerves the name of thought, that is more intolerable than the bittereſt reflections. This I know, that there is an incoherence, in which the mind ſeems to wander without rudder and pilot, that laughs to ſcorn the ſuperſtitious fictions of future puniſhments invented by deſigning prieſts. Oh, how many ſleepleſs days and week did I endure! the thoughts frantic, the tongue raving! While we can ſtill adhere, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, to the method of miſery, there is a ſort of nameleſs complacency that lurks under all that we can endure. We are ſtill conſcious that we are men; we wonder at and admire our powers of being miſerable. But, when the maſts and tackle of the intellectual veſſel are all ſwept away, then is the true ſadneſs. We have no conſciouſneſs to ſuſtain us, no ſentiments of dignity, no ſecret admiration of what we are, ſtill clinging to our hearts.

All this I venture to affirm, with the full recollection of what I ſuffered when reſtored to my ſenſes, preſent to my mind.

When the account was cloſed, and the loſs of my laſt ſtake had finiſhed the ſcene, I roſe, and, quitting the fatal ſpot where theſe tranſactions had paſſed, entered the ſtreet, with a heart oppreſſed, and a burſting head. My eyes glared, but I ſaw nothing, and could think of nothing. It was already

ready nearly dark; and the day which had been tempeſtuous, was ſucceeded by a heavy and ſettled rain. I wandered for ſome time, not knowing whither I went. My pace which had at firſt been ſlow, gradually increaſed, and I traverſed the whole city with a hurried and impatient ſtep. The ſtreets which had contained few perſons at firſt, gradually loſt thoſe few. I was almoſt alone. I ſaw occaſionally ragged and houſeleſs miſery ſhrinking under the cover of a miſerable ſhed; I ſaw the midnight robber, watching for his prey, and ready to ſtart upon the unwary paſſenger. From me he fled; there was ſomething in my air that impelled even deſperate violation to ſhrink from the encounter. I continued this inceſſant, unmeaning exertion for hours. At length, by an accidental glance of the eye, I found myſelf at the gate of my own hotel. Heedleſs of what it was I did, I entered: and, as nature was now completely exhauſted within me, ſunk down in a ſort of inſenſibility at the foot of the grand ſtair-caſe.

This ſtupour after a conſiderable interval gradually ſubſided. I opened my eyes, and ſaw various figures flitting about me; but ſeemed to myſelf equally incapable of collecting my thoughts and of ſpeech. My underſtanding indeed ſhortly became clearer, but an inſuperable reluctance to voluntary exertion hung upon me. I explained myſelf only in monoſyllables; a ſort of inſtinctive terror of diſcloſing what had paſſed, to the admirable woman I had ſacrificed, maintained in me this perpetual reſerve. For ſeveral days together I ſat from morning till night in one immoveable poſture, nor was any thing of force enough to awaken me to exertion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IT was not long before the unhappy partner of my fortunes was informed of what had paſſed. The wretches who had ſtripped me of my all, ſoon made their appearance to claim what was no longer mine. What would have been their reception, if I had ſufficiently poſſeſſed myſelf to parley with them on the ſubject, I am unable to determine. I could not have preſerved the wreck of my property from their graſp, but at the expence of an indelible ſtain upon my honour; yet my deſperation would probably have led me to a conduct equally extravagant and uſeleſs. In the condition in which I was, the whole direction of the buſineſs devolved upon Marguerite; and never did human creature demean herſelf with greater magnanimity and propriety. She ſaw at once that ſhe could not reſiſt their claims but at the expence of my reputation; for herſelf ſhe valued not riches, and had no dread of poverty; and, thus circumſtanced, ſhe had the courage herſelf to bring to me the papers they offered, the object of which I ſcarcely underſtood, and to cauſe me to annex that ſignature which was to ſtrip her and her children of all earthly fortune. Her purpoſe was, as ſoon as this buſineſs was over, to cauſe us to quit France, and to retire into ſome ſcene of virtuous obſcurity. But ſhe would not leave behind her for the laſt deſcendants of the illuſtrious counts of St. Leon any avoidable diſgrace. Her mode of reaſoning upon the ſubject was extremely ſimple. Obſcurity ſhe regarded as no misfortune; and eminent ſituation, where it fairly preſented itſelf, as a reſponſibility it would be baſe to ſhrink from; ignominy alone ſhe conſidered as the proper theme

theme of abhorrence. For the ſickleneſs and inconſtancy of fortune it is impoſſible to anſwer; by one of thoſe reverſes in which ſhe appears to delight, ſhe might yet reſtore us to the luſtre of our former condition; but if the name of St. Leon was henceforth to diſappear from the annals of France, ſhe was deſirous at leaſt, as far as depended on her, that it ſhould expire, like the far famed bird of Arabia, in the midſt of perfumes.

When the whole ſituation of Marguerite is taken into conſideration, the reader, like myſelf, will probably ſtand aſtoniſhed at the fortitude of her conduct. She had come to Paris, unable any longer to tranquiliſe the agitation of her mind, and exhauſted with fears, ſuſpicions and alarms. When ſhe arrived ſhe experienced indeed one deluſive moment of tranſport and joy. But that was ſoon over. It was ſucceeded by reflections and conjectures reſpecting the myſteriouſneſs of my behaviour; it was ſucceeded by my unexpected departure, and the hourly expectation of my return. After the lapſe of a night and a day, I returned indeed, but in what a condition? Drenched with rain, trembling with inanition, ſpeechleſs and alone. Scarcely had ſhe received notice of my arrival, and come forward to meet me, than ſhe ſaw me fall, motionleſs and inſenſible, at her feet. She watched my recovery, and hung with indeſcribable expectation over my couch. She was only called away by the wretches who came to advance their accurſed claims, and to viſit her with the intelligence of our ruin, as with a thunderbolt. Already enfeebled and alarmed by all the preceding circumſtances, they ſpoke with no conſideration to her weakneſs, they ſtooped to no qualifications and palliatives, but diſcloſed the whole in the moſt abrupt and ſhocking manner. Any

other

other woman would have ſunk under this accumulation of ill. Marguerite only borrowed vigour from her ſituation, and roſe in proportion to the preſſure of the calamity. She took her reſolution at once, and anſwered them in the moſt firm and deciſive language.

The period of inactivity and ſtupour that at firſt ſeized me, was ſucceeded by a period of frenzy. It was in this condition that Marguerite conducted me and my children to an obſcure retreat in the canton of Soleure in the republic of Switzerland. Cheapneſs was the firſt object; for the moſt miſerable pittance was all ſhe had ſaved from the wreck of our fortune. She had not choſen for beauty of ſituation, or magnificence of proſpects. The ſhock her mind had ſuſtained was not ſo great as to deſtroy her activity and fortitude, but it left her little leiſure for the wantonneſs of ſtudied indulgences. The ſcene was remote and ſomewhat ſterile. She conceived that, when I recovered my ſenſes, an event which ſhe did not ceaſe to promiſe herſelf, ſolitude would be moſt grateful, at leaſt to the firſt ſtage of my returning reaſon.

Hither then it was that ſhe led me, our ſon and three daughters. Immediately upon our arrival ſhe purchaſed a ſmall and obſcure but neat cottage, and attired herſelf and her children in habits ſimilar to thoſe of the neighbouring peaſants. My paternal eſtates, as well as thoſe which had fallen to me by marriage, had all been ſwallowed up in the gulph which my accurſed conduct had prepared. Marguerite made a general ſale of our moveables, our ornaments, and even our clothes. A few books guided by the attachment to literature, which had always attended me, were all that ſhe ſaved from the wreck. A conſiderable part of the ſum thus produced was appropriated by

my

my creditors. Marguerite had the prudence and ſkill to ſatisfy them all, and was contented to retain that only which remained when their demands were diſcharged. This was the laſt dictate of her pride and the high-born integrity of her nature, at the time that ſhe thus departed a voluntary exile from her native country. Two ſervants accompanied us in our flight, whoſe attachment was ſo great, that even if their attendance had not been neceſſary, it would have been found ſomewhat difficult to ſhake them off. Marguerite however was governed by the ſtricteſt principles of economy; and, whatever the ſtruggle might have been with the importunity of humble affection in diſmiſſing theſe laſt remains of our profuſe and luxurious houſhold, ſhe would have thought herſelf obliged to proceed even to this extreme, if judicious parſimony had demanded it from her. But it did not. Our youngeſt daughter was at this time only twelve months old, and it would have been ſcarcely poſſible for the mother, however reſolute in her exertions, to have diſcharged the cares due to ſuch a family, at a time when the father of it was ſuffering under ſo heavy an affliction. One female ſervant ſhe retained to aſſiſt her in theſe offices. She could not diſpenſe herſelf from a very aſſiduous attention to me. She could never otherwiſe have been ſatisfied, that every thing was done, that ought to done, that every tenderneſs was exerciſed that might be demanded by my humiliating ſituation, or that ſufficient ſagacity and ſkill were employed in watching and encouraging the gleams of returning reaſon. The violence of my par-xyſms however was frequently ſuch as to render a manual force greater than hers, neceſſary, to prevent me from effecting ſome deſperate miſchief. Peter, a truſty ſervant, nearly of my own age, and who had at-

tended upon my perſon almoſt from infancy, was retained by Marguerite for this purpoſe. I was greatly indebted for the recovery which ſpeedily followed, to the affectionate anxiety and enlightened care of this incomparable woman. It is inconceivable to thoſe who have never been led to a practical examination of the ſubject, how much may be effected in this reſpect by an attachment ever on the watch, and an underſtanding judicious to combine, where hired attendance would ſleep, and the coarſeneſs of a blunt inſenſibility would irritate, nay perhaps mortally injure.

It is ſcarcely poſſible to conceive of a wife more intereſting and admirable then Marguerite appeared upon the preſent occaſion. Fallen at once from the higheſt rank to the loweſt poverty, ſhe did not allow herſelf a mean and pitiful regret. No reverſe could be more complete and abrupt, but ſhe did not ſink under it. She proved in the moſt convincing manner, that her elevation was not the offspring of wealth or rank, but was properly her own. She gave a grace, even a luſtre, to poverty, which it can only receive from the emanations of a cultivated mind. Her children were reconciled and encouraged by her example, and ſoon forgot thoſe indulgences which had not yet had time to emaſculate their ſpirits. The deplorable ſituation to which the father of the family was reduced, was far from leading her to ceaſe from her efforts in the bitterneſs of deſpair. She determined for the preſent to be both a father and a mother to her children. She looked forward with confidence to my ſpeedy recovery. Though I was the author of all her calamities, ſhe did not permit this conſideration to ſubtract from the purity of her affection, or the tenderneſs of her anxiety. She reſolved that no word or look of hers ſhould ever reproach me with

my

my miſconduct. She had been accuſtomed to deſire rank, and affluence, and indulgence for her children; and that her ſon might run the career of glory which his forefathers ran, and that her daughters might unite their fates with what was moſt illuſtrious and honorable in their native country. But, if ſhe were diſappointed in this, ſhe was determined, as far as it ſhould be in her power, to give them virtue and cheerfulneſs and content, a mind, that ſhould find reſources within itſelf, and call forth regard and eſteem from the reſt of mankind.

My recovery was fitful and precarious, ſometimes appearing to be rapidly on the advance, and at others to threaten a total relapſe. Among the expedients that Marguerite employed to re-excite the ſlumbering ſpark of reaſon, was that of paternal affection. Ever on the watch for a favourable opportunity, ſhe ſometimes brought to me her own little name-ſake, who, though only twelve months old, did not fail to diſcover unequivocal marks of that playfulneſs and gaiety which made ſo conſiderable a part of her conſtitutional character. Her innocent ſmiles, her frolic and careleſs laughter, produced a reſponſive vibration that reached to my inmoſt heart. They were not unfrequently, powerful enough to check the career of my fury, or to raiſe me from the loweſt pitch of deſpondence. Julia wept for me, and Louiſa endeavoured to copy the offices of kindneſs ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee her mother perform: Charles, who conceived more fully than the reſt the nature of my indiſpoſition, was upon all occaſions ſolicitous to be admitted into my preſence, and attended me for the moſt part with ſpeechleſs anxiety, while his watchful, gliſtening eye uttered volumes without the aſſiſtance of words. His mother at length

yielded

yielded to his importunity, and he became eſtabliſhed the regular aſſiſtant of Peter in the care of my perſon. The reſtleſsneſs and impetuoſity he had hitherto manifeſted, ſeemed upon this occaſion entirely to ſubſide; hour after hour he willingly continued ſhut up in my chamber, eager for every opportunity of uſefulneſs, and gratified with that complacence with which the human mind never fails to be impreſſed, when it regards its actions as beneficent, or approves its temper as compaſſionate.

The reſtoration of my health was greatly retarded by the melancholy impreſſions which neceſſarily offered themſelves to my mind, when recollection reſumed her ſeat. It was fortunate for me that this ſort of retroſpection appears not to be the firſt thing that occurs after a paroxyſm of inſanity. When the tide of incoherent ideas ſubſides, the ſoul is left in a ſtate of exhauſtion, and ſeems, by a ſort of inſtinct, to ſhun the influx of tumultuous emotions, and to dwell upon ſuch feelings as are mild, tranquil and reſtorative. Once however, when I was nearly recovered, the thought of what I had been, and the recollection of what I was, violently ſuggeſting themſelves to my mind, brought on a relapſe attended with more alarming and diſcouraging ſymptoms than my original alienation. At that moment Marguerite was for the firſt time irreſiſtibly ſtruck with the conception that mine was an incurable lunacy; and, as ſhe afterwards aſſured me, at no period down to that inſtant, had ſhe felt herſelf ſo truly inconſolable. But even a ſentiment of the laſt deſpair was incapable of ſuperſeding the active beneficence of Marguerite. Her aſſiduities, ſo far as related to this fatal calamity, were at length crowned with ſucceſs. Her gloomy prognoſtics were not realiſed, and the

diſtemper

diſtemper of my underſtanding quitted me for ever. Wretched however, as I have already remarked, beyond all common notions of wretchedneſs, were my thoughts, when my ſoul returned to its proper bias, and I fully ſurveyed the nature of my preſent ſituation. Marguerite, who, by her ſagacity and patience, had recovered me from a ſtate of the moſt dreadful diſeaſe, now exerted herſelf to effect the more arduous taſk of reconciling me to myſelf. She aſſured me that ſhe forgave me from her inmoſt heart; nay, that ſhe was thankful to Providence, which, in the midſt of what the world calls great calamities, had preſerved to her, what ſhe moſt valued, my affection entire. She contraſted what had been the ſubject of her apprehenſions before ſhe came to Paris, with what had proved to be the ſtate of the caſe afterwards. She averred, that the worſt that had happened was trivial and tolerable, compared with the notion that her fears had delineated. She had feared to find my heart alienated from her, and herſelf a widowed mother to orphan children. She dreaded leſt I ſhould have proved myſelf worthleſs in her eyes, leſt I ſhould have been found to have committed to oblivion the moſt ſacred of all duties, and, for the gratification of a low and contemptible caprice, ſacrificed all pretenſions to honour and character. For that indeed her heart would have bled; againſt that all the pride ſhe derived from her anceſtry and my own would have revolted; that would have produced a revulſion of her frame, ſnapping the chain of all her habits, and putting a violent cloſe upon all the ſentiments ſhe had moſt fondly nourished. She dreaded indeed that ſhe ſhould not have ſurvived it. But the miſtake I had committed was of a very different nature. I had neither forgotten that I was a huſband nor a father; I had only made an injudicious and unfortunate

tunate choice of the way of discharging what was due to these characters. What had passed was incapable of impeaching either the constancy of my affections, or the integrity of my principles. She forgave me, and it was incumbent upon me to forgive myself.

She assured me that povery, in her apprehension, was a very slight evil, and she appealed to my own understanding for the soundness of her judgment. She bid me look round upon the peasantry of the neighbourhood, upon a footing with whom we were now placed, and ask my own heart whether they were not happy. One disadvantage indeed they were subjected to, the absence of cultivation and learning. She could never bring herself to believe that ignorance was a benefit; she saw the contrary of this practically illustrated in her own case, in mine, and in that of all the persons to whom through life she had been most ardently attached. She wished her children to attain intellectual refinement, possess fully the attributes of a rational nature, and to be as far removed as possible from the condition of stocks and stones, by accumulating a magazine of thoughts, and by a rich and cultivated sensibility. But the want of fortune did not in our case, as the case of so many others, shut them out from this advantage: it was in our own power to bestow it upon them.

It was the part of a reasonable man, she told me, not to waste his strength in useless regrets for what was past, and had already eluded his grasp; but to advert to the blessings he had still in possession. If we did this in our present situation we should find every reason for contentment and joy. Our pleasure in each other, and the constancy of our attachment, was unassailed and unimpaired.

impaired. Where were there two married perſons, ſhe would venture to aſk, who had more reaſon to applaud their connection, or to whom their connection was pregnant with ſo various gratifications? From ourſelves, we had only to turn our thoughts to our children; and we were ſurely as ſingularly fortunate in this reſpect, as in each other. Charles, who had always been the ſubject of our pride, had lately exhibited ſuch an example of patient ſympathy and filial affection, as perhaps had never been equalled in a child ſo young. The ſenſibility of Julia, the underſtanding of Louiſa, and the vivacity of Marguerite, were, all of them ſo many growing ſources of inexhauſtible delight. Our children were intelligent, affectionate and virtuous. Thus circumſtanced, ſhe intreated me not to indulge that jaundice of the imagination, which ſhould create to itſelf a ſentiment of melancholy and diſcontent in the midſt of this terreſtrial paradiſe.

Moſt virtuous of women, now perhaps the pureſt and the brighteſt among the ſaints in heaven, why was I deaf to the ſoundneſs of your exhortations, and the generoſity of your ſentiments? Deaf indeed I was! A prey to the deepeſt dejection, they appeared to me the offspring of miſapprehenſion and paradox! Suppoſing in the mean time that they were reaſonable and juſt in the mouth of her who uttered them, I felt them as totally foreign to my own ſituation. The language, as they were, of innocence, it was not wonderful that to an innocent heart they ſpoke tranquillity and peace. Marguerite looked round upon the preſent ruſticity and plainneſs of our condition, and every thing that ſhe ſaw talked to her of her merit and her worth. If we were reduced, ſhe was in no way accountable for that

reduction;

reduction; it had been the teſt of her magnanimity, her patience, and the immutableneſs of her virtue. She ſmiled at the aſſaults of adverſity, and felt a merit in her ſmiles. How different was my ſituation! Every thing that I ſaw reminded me of my guilt, and upbraided me with crimes that it was hell to recollect. My own garb, and that of my wife and children, the deſertion in which we lived, the ſimple benches, the unhewn raſters, the naked walls, all told me what it was I had done, and were ſo many echoes to my conſcience, repeating, without intermiſſion and without end, its heart-breaking reproaches. Sleep was almoſt a ſtranger to me; theſe inceſſant monitors confounded my ſenſes in a degree ſcarcely ſhort of madneſs itſelf. It is the property of vice to convert every thing that ſhould be conſolation, into an additional ſource of anguiſh. The beauty, the capacity and the virtue of my children, the affection with which they regarded me, the patience and attentiveneſs and forbearance of their excellent mother, were all ſo many aggravations of the miſchief I had pepetrated. I could almoſt have wiſhed to have been the object of their taunts and execration. I could have wiſhed to have been diſengaged from the deareſt charities of our nature, and to have borne the weight of my crimes alone. It would have been a relief to me, if my children had been covered with the moſt loathſome diſeaſes, deformed and monſtrous. It would have been a relief to me, if they had been abortive in underſtanding, and odious in propenſities, if their hearts had teemed with every vice, and every day had marked them the predeſtined victims of infamy. The guilt of having ſtripped them of every external faculty would then have ſet light upon me. But thus to have ruined the moſt lovely family

perhaps

perhaps that exiſted on the face of the earth, the moſt exemplary of women, and children in whom I diſtinctly marked the bud of every excellence and every virtue, was a conduct that I could never forgive even to myſelf. Oh, Damville, Damville! beſt of men! trueſt of friends! why didſt thou put thy truſt in ſuch a wretch as I am! Hadſt thou no preſentiment of the fatal conſequences? Wert thou empowered to commit thy only child and all her poſſible offspring to ſo dreadful a riſk? Indeed it was not well done! It was meant in kindneſs; but it was the cruelleſt miſchief that could have been inflicted on me. I was not a creature qualified for ſuch dear and tender connections. I was deſtined by nature to wander a ſolitary outcaſt on the face of the earth. For that only, that fearful miſery, was I fitted. Why, miſguided, misjudging man! didſt thou not leave me to my fate? Even that would have been leſs dreadful than what I have experienced!—Wretch that I am! Why do I reproach my beſt benefactor? No, let me turn the whole current of my invective upon myſelf! Damville was actuated by the nobleſt and moſt generous ſentiment that ever entered the human mind. What a return then have I made, and to what a benefit!

All the previous habits of my mind had taught me to feel my preſent circumſtances with the utmoſt acuteneſs. Marguerite, the generous Marguerite, ſtood, with a ſoul almoſt indifferent, between the oppoſite ideas of riches and poverty. Not ſo her huſband. I had been formed by every accident of my life, to the love of ſplendour. High, heroic feats, and not the tranquillity of rural retirement, or the purſuits of a character profeſſedly literary, had been the food of my imagination, ever ſince the faculty of imagination

was

was unfolded in my mind. The field of the cloth of gold, the ſiege and the battle of Pavia, were for ever preſent to my recollection. Francis the Firſt, Bayard and Bourbon eternally formed the ſubject of my viſions and reveries. Theſe propenſities had indeed degenerated into an infantine taſte for magnificence and expence; but the roots did not embrace their ſoil the leſs forcibly, becauſe the branches were preſſed down and diverted from their genuine perpendicular. That from a lord, deſcended from ſome of the moſt illuſtrious houſes in France, and myſelf amply imbued with the high and diſdainful ſpirit incident to my rank, I ſhould become a peaſant, was itſelf a ſufficient degradation. But I call the heavens to witneſs that I could have endured this with patience, if I had endured it alone. I ſhould have regarded it as the juſt retribution of my follies, and ſubmitted with the moſt exemplary reſignation. But I could not with an equal mind behold my wife and children involved in my puniſhment. I turned my eyes upon the partner of my life, and recalled with genuine anguiſh the magnificence to which ſhe was accuſtomed, and the hopes to which ſhe was born. I looked upon my children, the fruit of my loins, and once the pride of my heart, and recollected that they were paupers, ruſtics, exhiles. I could foreſee no return to rank, but for them and their poſterity an interminable ſucceſſion of obſcurity and meanneſs. A real parent can ſupport the calamity of perſonal degradation, but he cannot bear to witneſs and anticipate this corruption of his blood. At ſome times I honoured Marguerite for her equanimity. At others I almoſt deſpiſed her for this integrity of her virtues. I accuſed her in my heart of being deſtitute of the ſpark of true nobility. Her patience I conſidered as little leſs

than

than meanneſs and vulgarity of ſpirit. It would have become her better, I thought, like me, to have curſed her fate, and the author of that fate; like me, to have ſpurned indignant at the ſlavery to which we were condemned; to have refuſed to be pacified, and to have waſted the laſt dregs of exiſtence in impatience and regret. I could act that which had involved us in this dire reverſe; but I could not encounter the conſequences of my act.

The ſtate of my mind was in the utmoſt degree dejected and forlorn. I carried an arrow in my heart, which the kindneſs of my wife and children proved inadequate to extract, and the ranklings of which time itſelf had not the power to aſſuage. The wound was not mortal; but, like the wound of Philoctetes, poiſoned with the blood of the Lernean Hydra, I dragged it about with me from year to year, and it rendered my exiſtence a galling burthen hardly to be ſupported. A great portion of my time was paſſed in a deep and mournful ſilence, which all the ſoothings that were addreſſed to me, could not prevail on me to break. Not that in this ſilence there was the leaſt particle of ill-humour or ſullenneſs. It was a mild and paſſive ſituation of the mind; affectionate, as far as it was any thing, to the perſons around me; but it was a ſpecies of diſability; my ſoul had not force enough to give motion to the organs of ſpeech, or ſcarcely to raiſe a finger. My eye only, and that only for a moment at a time, pleaded for forbearance and pardon. I ſeemed like a man in that ſpecies of diſtemper, in which the patient ſuffers a waſting of the bones, and at length preſents to us the ſhadow, without the powers of a human body.

This

This was at ſome times my condition. But my ſtupour would at others ſuddenly ſubſide. Mechanically, and in a moment, as it were, I ſhook off my ſupineneſs, and ſought the mountains. The wildneſs of an untamed and ſavage ſcene beſt accorded with the temper of my mind. I ſprung from cliff to cliff among the points of the rock. I ruſhed down precipices that to my ſobered ſenſe appeared in a manner perpendicular, and only preſerved my life, with a ſort of inborn and unelective care, by catching at the roots and ſhrubs which occaſionally broke the ſteepneſs of the deſcent. I hung over the tops of rocks ſtill more fearful in their declivities, and courted the giddineſs and whirl of ſpirit which ſuch ſpectacles are accuſtomed to produce. I could not reſolve to die: death had too many charms to ſuit the ſelf-condemnation that purſued me. I found a horrible ſatisfaction in determining to live and to avenge upon myſelf the guilt I had incurred. I was far from imagining that the evils I had yet ſuffered, were a mere ſport and oſtentation of miſery, compared with thoſe that were in reſerve for me.

The ſtate of mind I am here deſcribing, was not madneſs, nor ſuch as could be miſtaken for madneſs. I never forgot myſelf, and what I was. I was never in that delirium of thought, in which the patient is reſtleſs and active without knowing what it is that he does, and from which, when roufed, he ſuddenly ſtarts, ſhakes off the dream that engaged him, and ſtands aſtoniſhed at himſelf. Mine was a rage, guided and methodiſed by the diſcipline of deſpair. I burſt into no fits of raving; I attempted no injury to any one. Marguerite therefore could not reconcile herſelf to the placing me under any reſtraint. I frequently returned home, with my clothes ſmeared with

the

the ſoil, and torn by the briars. But my family ſoon became accuſtomed to my returning in perſonal ſafety; and therefore, whatever was the uneaſineſs my wife felt from my excurſions, ſhe preferred the enduring it, to the idea of impoſing on me any ſpecies of violence.

The ſtate of my family preſented a ſingular ſort of contraſt with that of its head. Marguerite was certainly not inſenſible to the oppoſition between her former and her preſent mode of life; but ſhe ſubmitted to the change with ſuch an unaffected cheerfulneſs and compoſure as might have extorted admiration from malignity itſelf. She would perhaps have diſmiſſed from her thoughts all retroſpect to our former grandeur, had not the dejection and deſpair that ſeemed to have taken poſſeſſion of my mind, forcibly and continually recalled it to her memory. For my ſufferings I am well aſſured ſhe felt the trueſt ſympathy; but there was one conſideration attending them that imperiouſly compelled her to taſk her fortitude. They deprived me of the ability of in any degree providing for and ſuperintending my family; it became therefore incumbent upon her to exert herſelf for the welfare of all. Had we never fallen under this aſtoniſhing reverſe, I might have ſpent my whole life in daily intercourſe with this admirable woman, without becoming acquainted with half the treaſures of her mind. She was my ſteward; and from the reſult of her own reflections made the moſt judicious diſpoſition of my property. She was my phyſician; not by adminiſtering medicines to my body, but by carefully ſtudying and exerting herſelf to remove the diſtemper of my mind. Unfortunately no diſtempers are ſo obſtinate as mental ones; yet, had my diſtemper had any lighter ſource than an upbraiding conſcience,

ſcience, I am perſuaded the wiſdom of Marguerite would have baniſhed it. She was the inſtructor of my children; her daughters felt no want of a governeſs, and I am even ready to doubt whether the leſſons of his mother did not amply ſupply to Charles his loſs of an education in the univerſity of Paris. The love of order, the activity, the induſtry, the cheerfulneſs, of, let me ſay, this illuſtrious matron, became contagious to all the inhabitants of my roof. Once and again have I ſtolen a glance at them, or viewed them from a diſtance buſied, ſometimes gravely, ſometimes gaily in the plain, and have whiſpered to my burſting heart, How miſerable am I! how happy they! So inſurmountable is the barrier that divides innocence from guilt! They may breathe the ſame air; they may dwell under the ſame roof; they may be of one family and one blood; they may aſſociate with each other every day and every hour; but they can never aſſimilate, never have any genuine contact. Is there a happier family than mine in all the vallies of this far-famed republic? Is there a family more virtuous, or more cultivated with all the refinements that conduce to the true dignity of man? I, I only am its burthen, and its ſtain! The pleaſure with which I am ſurrounded on every ſide, finds a repellant quality in my heart that will not ſuffer its approach. To whatever is connected with me I communicate misfortune. Whenever I make my appearance, thoſe countenances that at all other times ſpoke contentment and hilarity, fall into ſadneſs. Like a peſtilential wind, I appear to breathe blaſt to the fruits of nature, and ſickline ſs to its aſpect.

Marguerite

Marguerite expoſtulated with me in the moſt ſoothing manner upon the obſtinacy of my malady. My Reginald! my love! ſaid ſhe, ceaſe to be unhappy, or to reproach yourſelf! You were raſh in the experiment you made upon the recources of your family. But have you done us miſchief, or have you conferred a benefit? I more than half incline to the latter opinion. Let us at length diſmiſs artificial taſtes, and idle and viſionary purſuits, that do not flow in a direct line from any of the genuine principles of our nature! Here we are ſurrounded with ſources of happineſs. Here we may live in true patriarchal ſimplicity. What is chivalry, what is military proweſs and glory? Believe me, they are the paſſions of a mind depraved, that with ambitious refinement ſeeks to be wiſe beyond the dictates of ſentiment or reaſon! There is no happineſs ſo ſolid, or ſo perfect, as that which diſdains theſe refinements. You, like me, are fond of the luxuriant and romantic ſcenes of nature. Here we are placed in the midſt of them. How idle it would be, to wiſh to change our arbours, our verdant lanes and thickets, for vaulted roofs, and gloomy halls, and maſſy plate? Alas, Reginald! it is I fear too true, that the ſplendour in which we lately lived, has its baſis in oppreſſion; and that the ſuperfluities of the rich, are a boon extorted from the hunger and miſery of the poor! Here we ſee a peaſantry more peaceful and leſs oppreſſed, than perhaps any other tract of the earth can exhibit. They are erect and independent, at once friendly and fearleſs. Is not this a refreſhing ſpectacle? I now begin practically to perceive that the cultivators of the fields and the vineyards are my brethren and my ſiſters; and my heart bounds with joy, as I feel my relations to ſociety multiply. How cumbrous is magnificence? The moderate man

man is the only free. He who reduces all beneath him to a ſtate of ſervitude, becomes himſelf the ſlave of his eſtabliſhment, and of all his domeſtics. To diminiſh the caſes in which the aſſiſtance of others is felt abſolutely neceſſary, is the only genuine road to independence. We can now move wherever we pleaſe without waiting the leiſure of others. Our ſimple repaſts require no tedious preparation, and do not impriſon us in ſaloons and eating rooms. Yet we partake of them with a more genuine appetite, and riſe from them more truly refreſhed, than from the moſt ſumptuous feaſt. I prepare for my meal by induſtry and exerciſe; and, when it is over, amuſe myſelf with my children in the fields and the ſhade.—Though I love the ſight of the peaſants, I would not be a peaſant. I would have a large ſtock of ideas, and a wider field of activity. I love the ſight of peaſants only for their acceſſories or by compariſon. They are comparatively more ſecure than any other large maſſes of men, and the ſcenes in the midſt of which they are placed are delightful to ſenſe. But I would not ſacrifice in prone oblivion the beſt characteriſtics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries; but they are the refinements and purifying of intellect, and the luxuries of uncoſtly, ſimple taſte. I would incite the whole world, if I knew how to do it, to put in a ſimilar claim. I would improve my mind; I would enlarge my underſtanding; I would contribute to the inſtruction of all connected with me, and to the maſs of human knowledge. The pleaſures I would purſue and diſſeminate, though not dependent on a large property, are ſuch as could not be underſtood by the ruſtic and the ſavage. Our ſon, bred in theſe fields indeed, will probably never become a *preux chevalier*, or figure in the roll of military heroes. But he may become

become ſomething happier and better. He may improve his mind, and cultivate his taſte. He may be the counſellor and protector of his ſiſters. He may be the ornament of the diſtrict in which he reſides. He may inſtitute in his adoptive country new defences for liberty, new ſyſtems of public benefit, and new improvements of life. There is no character more truly admirable than the patriot-yeoman, who unites with the utmoſt ſimplicity of garb and manners, an underſtanding fraught with information and ſentiment, and a heart burning with the love of mankind. Such were Fabricius and Regulus among the ancients, and ſuch was Tell, the founder of the Helvetic liberty. For my part, I am inclined to be thankful, that this unexpected reverſe in our circumſtances, has made me acquainted with new pleaſures, and opened to my mind an invaluable leſſon. If you could but be prevailed on to enter into our pleaſures, to diſmiſs idle reproaches and pernicious propenſities, our happineſs would then be complete.

The expoſtulations of Marguerite often excited my attention, often my reſpect, and ſometimes produced a ſort of imperfect conviction. But the conviction was tranſient, and the feelings I have already deſcribed as properly my own, returned when the freſh and vivid impreſſion of what I had heard was gone. It was in vain that I heard the praiſes of ſimplicity and innocence. I was well pleaſed to ſee thoſe who were neareſt to me, not affecting contentment, but really contented with theſe things. But I could not be contented for them. The leſſons of my education had left too deep an impreſſion. I could myſelf have ſurrendered my claim to admiration and homage, as a penance for my miſdeeds; but I could not figure to myſelf a genuine

ſatisfaction unaccompanied by theſe acceſſories; and this ſatisfaction I obſtinately and impatiently coveted for thoſe I loved.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE I murmured in bitterneſs of ſoul at the ſowneſs to which they were reduced, a ſtill heavier calamity impended over them, as if in vengeance againſt the fantaſtic refinements of diſtreſs over which I brooded.

I was wandering, as I had often done, with a gloomy and rebellious ſpirit, among the rocks, a few miles diſtant from the place of our habitation. It was the middle of ſummer. The weather had been remarkably fine; but I diſdained to allow the gratifications which ariſe from a pure atmoſphere and a ſerene ſky, to find entrance in my ſoul. My excurſions had for ſome days been inceſſant: and the ſun, which matured the corn and blackened the grapes around, had imbrowned my viſage, and boiled in my blood. I drank in fierceneſs and deſperation from the fervour of his beams. One night, as in ſullen mood I watched his ſetting from a point of the rock, I perceived the clearneſs of the day ſubſiding in a threatening evening. The clouds gathered in the weſt, and, as night approached, were overſpread with a deep dye of the fierceſt crimſon. The wind roſe, and, during the hours of darkneſs, its roarings were hollow and tempeſtuous.

In the morning the clouds were hurried rapidly along, and the air was changed from a long ſeries of ſultrineſs to a nipping cold. This change of the atmoſphere I diſregarded, and purſued my rambles,

rambles. A little before noon however, the air ſuddenly grew ſo dark, as to produce a ſenſation perfectly tremendous. I felt as if the darkeſt night had never exceeded it. The impetuous motion to which I had been impelled, partly by the fever in my blood, and partly by the turbulence of the ſeaſon, was ſuſpended. Mechanically I looked round me for ſhelter. But I could ill diſtinguiſh the objects that were near me, when a flaſh of lightning, blue and ſulphureous, came directly in my face, with a brightneſs that threatened to extinguiſh the organ of viſion. The thunder that followed was of a length and loudneſs to admit of no compariſon from any object with which I am acquainted. The burſts were ſo frequent as almoſt to confound themſelves with each other. At preſent, I thought only of myſelf; and the recent habits of my mind were not calculated to make me peculiarly acceſſible to fear. I ſtood awe-ſtruck; but rather with the awe that inheres to a cultivated imagination, than that which conſiſts in apprehenſion. I ſeemed ready to mount amidſt the clouds, and penetrate the veil with which nature conceals her operations. I would have plunged into the receſſes in which the ſtorm was engendered, and bared my boſom to the ſtreaming fire. Meanwhile my thoughts were ſolemniſed and fixed by obſerving the diverſified dance of the lightnings upon the points of the rocks, contraſting as they did in the ſtrongeſt manner with the darkneſs in which the reſt of the ſcene was enveloped. This added contention of the elements, did not however ſuſpend the raging of the wind. Preſently a ſtorm of mingled hail and rain poured from the clouds, and was driven with inconceivable impetuoſity. The hail-ſtones were of ſo aſtoniſhing a magnitude, that, before I was aware, I was beaten by them to the

ground. Not daring to attempt to riſe again, I ſimply endeavoured to place myſelf in ſuch a manner as might beſt protect me from their violence. I therefore remained proſtrate, liſtening to the force with which they ſtruck upon the earth, and feeling the rebound of their blows from different parts of my body.

In about twenty minutes the ſhower abated, and in half a hour was entirely over. When I began to move, I was extremely ſurpriſed at the ſenſation of ſoreneſs I felt in every part of me. I raiſed myſelf upon my elbow, and ſaw the hail-ſtones, in ſome places lying in heaps like hillocks of ice, while in others they had ploughed up the ſurface, and buried themſelves in the earth. As I looked further, I perceived immenſe trees torn from their roots, and thrown to a great diſtance upon the declivity. To the noiſe which they made in their deſcent, which muſt have been aſtoniſhingly great, I had been at the time inſenſible. Such were the marks which the tempeſt had left upon the mountains. In the plain it was ſtill worſe. I could perceive the ſoil, for long ſpaces together, converted into a moraſs, the ſtanding corn beaten down and buried in the mud, the vines torn into a thouſand pieces, the fruit trees demoliſhed, and even in ſome places the animals themſelves, lambs, ſheep and cows, ſtrewing the fields with their mangled carcaſes. The whole hopes of the year over which my eyes had glanced a few minutes before, for it was near the period of harveſt, were converted into the moſt barren and dreary ſcene that any quarter of the globe ever witneſſed. I was mounted upon a conſiderable eminence, and had an extenſive proſpect of this horrible devaſtation.

As I ſtood gazing in mute aſtoniſhment, ſuddenly a fear came over me that ſtruck dampneſs to my

my very heart. What was the ſituation of my own family and their little remaining property, amidſt this dreadful ruin? I was in a ſituation, where, though I nearly faced our habitation, a point of the rock intercepted it from my ſight. The obſtacle was but a ſmall one, yet it would require a conſiderable circuit to overcome. I flew along the path, with a ſpeed that ſcarcely permitted me to breathe. When I had paſſed the upper rock, the whole extenſive ſcene opened upon me in an inſtant. What were my ſenſations, when I perceived that the devaſtation had been even more complete here, than on the ſide where I firſt viewed it! My own cottage in particular, which that very morning had contained, and I hoped continued to contain, all that was moſt dear to my heart, ſeemed to ſtand an entire ſolitude in the midſt of an immenſe ſwamp.

Marguerite, whoſe idea, upon our retreat into Switzerland, had been that of conforming without reſerve to the new ſituation that was allotted us, had immediately expended the whole of what remained from the ſhipwreck of our fortune, in the purchaſe of the cottage in which we dwelt, and a ſmall portion of land around it, ſufficient with economy for the ſupport of our family. Under her direction the hills had been covered with vines, and the fields with corn. She had purchaſed cows to furniſh us with milk, and ſheep with their fleeces, and had formed her eſtabliſhment upon the model of the Swiſs peaſantry in our neighbourhood. Reverting to the ſimplicity of nature, appeared to her like building upon an immoveable baſis, which the claſh of nations could not deſtroy, and which was too humble to fear the treachery of courts, or the caprice of artificial refinement. It

It was all ſwept away in a moment. Our little property looked as if it had been particularly a mark for the vengeance of heaven, and was more utterly deſtroyed than any of the ſurrounding ſcenes. There was not a tree that remained ſtanding; there was not a hedge or a limit that remained within or around it; chaos had here reſumed his empire, and avenged himſelf of the extraordinary order and beauty it had lately diſplayed.

I was not overwhelmed with this aſtoniſhing ſpectacle. At that moment nature found her way to my heart, and made a man of me. I made light of theſe petty acceſſories of our exiſtence; and the thought of my wife and my children, ſimply as they were in themſelves, filled every avenue of my heart. For them, and them alone, I was intereſted: it was a queſtion for their lives. To conceive of what they might perſonally have ſuſtained, was a horror that ſeemed to freeze up all the arteries of my heart. I deſcended from the mountain. It was with the greateſt difficulty, and not without many circuitous deviations, that I proceeded, ſo much was the ſurface changed, and ſo deep and miry the ſwamps. My terror increaſed, as I paſſed near to the carcaſes of the animals who had fallen victims to this convulſion of the elements. I obſerved with inconceivable alarm that the dead or wounded bodies of ſome human beings, were intermingled with the brute deſtruction. I ſtaid not to enquire whether they were yet in a ſtate to require aſſiſtance; the idea that had taken poſſeſſion of me, left no room for the ſentiment of general humanity.

A little further on I diſtinctly remarked the body of a woman at ſome diſtance from any habitation, who appeared to be dead, deſtroyed by the

the

ſtorm. Near her lay a female infant, apparently about ſix years of age. My attention was involuntarily arreſted; I thought of Louiſa, that ſweet and amiable child, ſo like her admirable mother. The figure was hers; the colour of the robe correſponded to that in which I laſt ſaw her. The child was lying on her face. With all the impatient emotions of a father, I ſtooped down. I turned over the body that I might identify my child. It was ſtill warm; life had ſcarcely deſerted it. I gazed upon the viſage; it was diſtorted with the agonies of death; but enough to convince me ſtill remained diſcernable it was not Louiſa!

I can ſcarcely recollect a period through all the ſtrange viciſſitudes of my exiſtence to be compared with this. If I had not felt what I then felt, I could never have conceived it. Human nature is ſo conſtituted, that the higheſt degree of anguiſh, an anguiſh in which the heart ſeems to ſtretch itſelf to take in the mightineſs of its woe, can be felt but for a few inſtants. When the calamity we feared is already arrived, or when the expectation of it is ſo certain as to ſhut out hope, there ſeems to be a principle within us by which we look with miſanthropic compoſure on the ſtate to which we are reduced, and the heart ſullenly contracts and accommodates itſelf to what it moſt abhorred. Our hopes wither; and our pride, our ſelf-complacence, all that taught us to rejoice in exiſtence, wither along with them. But when hope yet ſtruggles with deſpair, or when the calamity abruptly announces itſelf, then is the true contention, the tempeſt and uproar of the ſoul too vaſt to be endured.

This ſentiment of ineffable wretchedneſs I experienced, when I ſtooped down over the body of the

the imaginary Louiſa, and when I haſtened to obtain the certainty which was of all things moſt terrible to me. The termination of ſuch a moment of horror, is ſcarcely leſs memorable than its intrinſic greatneſs. In an inſtant the ſoul recovers its balance, and the thought is as if it has never been. I clapped my hands in an ecſtacy at once of joy and aſtoniſhment, ſo ſure did I ſeem to have made myſelf of my misfortune; I quitted the body with an unburthened heart; I flew towards my home, that I might aſcertain whether I was prematurely ſpeaking comfort to my ſpirit.

At length I reached it. I ſaw the happy groupe aſſembled at the door. Marguerite had entertained the ſame terrors for me, with which I had myſelf ſo lately been impreſſed. We flew into each other's arms. She hid her face in my neck, and ſobbed audibly. I embraced each of the children in turn, but Louiſa with the moſt heart-felt delight. Are you ſafe, papa? Are you ſafe, my child? were echoed on every ſide. A ſpectator unacquainted with what was paſſing in our hearts, would certainly have ſtood aſtoniſhed to ſee the tranſport with which we exulted, ſurrounded as we were with deſolation and ruin.

After an interval however we opened our eyes, and began to ruminate upon the new condition in which we were placed. Marguerite and myſelf watched each other's countenances with anxiety to diſcover what were likely to be the feelings of either in this terrible criſis. Be of good heart, my love! ſaid Marguerite. Do not ſuffer the accident which has happened, entirely to overcome you! There was a mixed compaſſion, tenderneſs and anxiety in the tone of voice with which ſhe uttered theſe words, that was inexpreſſibly delightful.

No,

No, Marguerite, replied I, with enthuſiaſtic impetuoſity, I am not caſt down; I never ſhall be caſt down again! Ruin is nothing to me, ſo long as I am ſurrounded with you and our dear children. I have for ſome time been a fool. In the midſt of every real bleſſing, I have faſhioned for myſelf imaginary evils. But my eyes are now opened. How eaſily is the human mind induced to forget thoſe benefits, with which we are conſtantly ſurrounded, and our poſſeſſion of which we regard as ſecure! The feelings of this morning have awakened me. I am now cured of my folly. I have learned how to value my domeſtic bleſſings as I ought. Having preſerved them, I eſteem myſelf to have loſt nothing. What are gold and jewels and precious utenſils? Mere droſs and dirt! The human face and the human heart, reciprocations of kindneſs and love, and all the nameleſs ſympathies of our nature, theſe are the only objects worth being attached to. What are rank and ſtation, the homage of the multitude and the applauſe of fools? Let me judge for myſelf! The value of a man is in his intrinſic qualities, in that of which power cannot ſtrip him, and which adverſe fortune cannot take away. That for which he is indebted to circumſtances, is mere trapping and tinſel. I ſhould love theſe precious and ingenuous creatures before me better, though in rags, than the children of kings in all the pomp of ornament. I am proud to be their father. Whatever may be my perſonal faults, the world is my debtor for having been the occaſion of their exiſtence. But they are endeared to me by a better principle than pride. I love them for their qualities. He that loves, and is loved by a race of pure and virtuous creatures, and that lives continually in the midſt of them, is an idiot, if he does

not think himself happy. Surrounded as I am now surrounded, I feel as irremoveable as the pillars of creation. Nothing that does not strike at their existence, can affect me with terror.

Marguerite viewed me with surprise and joy. Now indeed, said she, you are the man I took you for, and the man I shall henceforth be prouder than ever to call my husband. The sorrow in which you lately indulged, was a luxury; and we must have done with luxuries. You will be our protector and our support.

Thus saying, she took me by the hand, and motioned me to view with her the devastation that had been committed. There was one path I had discovered, in which we might proceed some way with tolerable ease. The scene was terrible. We were indeed beggars. A whole province had been destroyed. All the corn and the fruits of the earth; most of the trees; in many places cattle; in some places men. Persons who had been rich in the morning, saw all the produce of their fields annihilated, and were unable even to guess by what process fertility was to be re-established. The comparatively wealthy scarcely knew how they were to obtain immediate subsistence; the humbler class, who always live by the expedients of the day, saw nothing before them but the prospect of perishing with hunger. We witnessed in one or two instances the anguish of their despair.

Our prospect was scarcely in any respect better than theirs; yet we felt differently. We were more impressed with the joy of our personal escape. As my error respecting the value of externals had been uncommonly great, the sudden revolution of opinion I experienced was equally memorable. The survey indeed that we took of the general distress somewhat saddened our hearts; but the

ſadneſs it gave, was that of ſobriety, not of dejection.

It was incumbent upon us to make a ſtrict examination into the amount of our property, and our immediate reſources; and in this office I united myſelf with Marguerite, not only with a degree of chearfulneſs and application, the perfect contraſt of my whole conduct ever ſince our arrival in Switzerland, but which greatly exceeded any thing I had ever before exhibited in a buſineſs of this nature. We found that, though all our hopes of a harveſt were annihilated, yet we were not deſtitute of the inſtant means of ſubſiſtence. The reſources we poſſeſſed, whether in money or proviſions, that were our dependence till the period when the new produce ſhould ſupply their place, were uninjured. Our implements of huſbandry remained as before. The land was not impoveriſhed, but had rather derived additional fertility from the effects of the ſtorm. What we had loſt was chiefly the produce of our capital for one year, together with a part of that capital itſelf in the live ſtock that had been deſtroyed. This was a loſs which a certain degree of care and ſcope in our external circumſtances might eaſily have enabled us to ſupply. But the principle of ſupply was denied us. It was with conſiderable difficulty that all the economy of Marguerite had enabled her to ſupport our family eſtabliſhment, while every thing of this kind had gone on proſperouſly. Such a ſhock as the preſent we were totally diſqualified to ſurmount. It compelled us to a complete revolution of our affairs.

Many indeed of our neighbours had ſcarcely any greater advantage in their private affairs than ourſelves. But they poſſeſſed one ſuperiority that proved of the greateſt importance in this conjuncture;

ture; they were natives of the ſtate in which they reſided. In the cantons of Switzerland, the deſtruction of the fruits of the earth, occaſioned by inclement ſeaſons and tempeſts, is by no means unfrequent; and it is therefore cuſtomary in plentiful years, to lay up corn in public magazines, that the people may not periſh in periods of ſcarcity. Theſe magazines are placed under the inſpection and diſpoſal of the magiſtracy; and the inhabitants looked to them with confidence for the ſupply of their need. No ſtorm however had occurred in the memory of man ſo terrible and ruinous as the preſent; and it became evident that the magazines would prove a reſource too feeble for the extent of the preſent emergency.

The ſtorm had ſpread itſelf over a ſpace of many leagues in circumference, not only in the canton of Soleure, but in the neighbouring cantons, particularly that of Berne. The ſufferers in our own canton only, amounted to ſcarcely leſs than ten thouſand. While the women and children for the moſt part remained at home, the houſes having in general ſuffered little other damage than the deſtruction of their windows, the fathers of families repaired to the ſeat of government to put in their claims for national relief; and theſe alone formed an immenſe troop, that threatened little leſs than to beſiege the public magazines and the magiſtrates. An accurate inveſtigation was entered into of the loſſes of each, it being the purpoſe of government, as far as its power extended, not only to ſupply the people with the means of immediate ſubſiſtence, but alſo, by diſburſements from the public treaſury, to recruit the ſtock of cattle, and to aſſiſt every one to return, with revived hopes and expectation, to the ſphere of his induſtry. The purpoſe was no doubt benevolent; but in the mean time

time the unhappy victims found in uncertainty and expectation a real and corroding anguiſh.

I advanced my claim with the reſt, but met with a peremptory refuſal. The harſh and rigorous anſwer I received, was, that they had not enough for their own people, and could ſpare nothing to ſtrangers. Upon this occaſion I was compelled to feel what it was to be an alien, and how different the condition in which I was now placed, from that I had filled in my native country. There I had lived in the midſt of a people, to whom the veneration of my anceſtry and my name ſeemed a part of their nature. They had witneſſed for ſeveral years the reſpectable manner in which I lived; the virtues of Marguerite were familiar to them; and they took an intereſt in every thing that concerned us, a ſentiment that confeſſed us at once for kindred and patrons. It was the turn of mind only which is generated by rank, that had compelled us to quit their vicinity; we might have continued in it, if not in affluence, at leaſt enjoying the gratifications that ariſe from general affection and reſpect. But here we were beheld with an eye of jealouſy and diſtaſte. We had no prejudice of birth and habit in our favour; indeed, in the reverſe of fortune which had brought us hither, Marguerite had been leſs deſirous of obtruding, than of withdrawing from the public eye, the circumſtance of our rank. We were too recent inmates to have ſecured by any thing of a perſonal nature an advantageous opinion among our neighbours. They ſaw only a miſerable and diſtracted father of a family, and a mother who, in ſpite of the ſimplicity ſhe cultivated, ſufficiently evinced that ſhe had been accuſtomed to a more elevated ſituation. The prepoſſeſſions of mankind are clearly unfavourable to a newcomer, an emigrant who has

has quitted his former connections and the ſcenes of his youth. They are unavoidably impelled to believe, that his taking up his abode in another country, muſt be owing to a weak and diſcreditable caprice, if it be not owing to ſomething ſtill more diſadvantageous to his character.

The calamity therefore which we had ſuffered in common with moſt of the inhabitants of the province, finally reduced us to the neceſſity of a ſecond emigration. The jealouſy with which we were regarded, daily became more viſible and more threatening. Tho', in conſequence of the diſtribution made by order of the ſtate, the price of commodities was not ſo much increaſed as might have been expected, we were conſidered as interlopers upon the portion of the natives; the ſellers could with difficulty be perſuaded to accommodate us, and the byſtanders treated us with murmurs and reviling. While we were deliberating what courſe to purſue in this emergency, certain officers of government one morning entered our habitation, producing an order of the ſenate for our immediate removal out of the territory. It is of the eſſence of coercive regulations, to expel, to impriſon and turn out of priſon, the individuals it is thought proper to control, without any care as to the miſchiefs they may ſuffer, and whether they periſh under or ſurvive the evil inflicted on them. We were accordingly allowed only from ſix in the morning till noon, to prepare for our departure. Our guards indeed offered to permit me to remain three days to wind up my affairs, upon condition that my wife and children were inſtantly removed into another country, as a ſort of hoſtages for my own departure. This indulgence however would have been uſeleſs. In the preſent ſtate of the country no purchaſer could be found for the little

eſtate

eſtate I poſſeſſed, and, if there could, it muſt doubtleſs have been diſpoſed of to great diſadvantage at ſuch an emergency. I know not how we ſhould have extricated ourſelves out of theſe difficulties, if a member of the ſenate, who, being one of my neareſt neighbours, had been ſtruck with admiration of the virtues of Marguerite, and with compaſſion for my family, had not paid me a viſit ſhortly after the arrival of the officers, and generouſly offered to take upon himſelf the care of my property, and to advance me what money might be neceſſary for my emigration. This offer, which at any other time might have been regarded as purely a matter of courſe, under the preſent circumſtances, when capital was ſo neceſſary for the revival of agriculture in the deſolated country, implied a liberal and diſintereſted ſpirit. I accepted the kindneſs of my neighbour in both its parts, but for the reimburſement of his loan referred him to the French miniſter to the United Cantons, who, under all the circumſtances of the caſe, and taking my eſtate as ſecurity for the money advanced, I thought it reaſonable to believe would attend to my application.

CHAP. IX.

MY affairs being thus for adjuſted, I took leave of my late habitation, and ſet off with my wife and children the ſame afternoon. In the evening we arrived at Baſle, where we were permitted to remain that night, and the next morning were conducted in form out of the north gate of the city, where our attendants quitted us, with a freſh

freſh prohibition under the ſevereſt penalties, if we were found within the enſuing twelve months in any of the territories of the Helvetic republic.

Marguerite and myſelf had already formed our plan. We began with diſmiſſing both our ſervants. An attendant was no longer neceſſary to me, nor a nurſe for the infant. The ſuggeſtion of this meaſure originated in myſelf. My temper at this time, as I have already ſaid, underwent a ſtriking change. I was reſolved to be happy; I was reſolved to be active. It was hard to part with perſons ſo long familar to us, and who appeared rather in the character of humble friends, than domeſtics; but an imperious neceſſity ſeemed to demand it. Let us, ſaid I to Marguerite, increaſe and ſecure our happineſs by diminiſhing our wants. I will be your huſbandman and your labourer; you may depend upon my perſeverance. My education has fitted me to endure hardſhip and fatigue, though the hardſhips then thought of were of a different nature. You have ever delighted in active uſefulneſs; and will not, I know, repine at this accumulation of employment. Let us accommodate ourſelves to our circumſtances. Our children, I perceive, are fated to be peaſants, and will therefore be eminently benefited by the example of patience and independence we ſhall ſet before them.

The next object of our plan related to the choice of our future place of reſidence. This originated with Marguerite. She had heard much of the beauty and richneſs of the country bordering on the lake of Conſtance, and ſhe thought that, while we denied ourſelves expenſive pleaſures, or rather while they were placed out of our reach, there would be a propriety in our procuring

curing for ourſelves a ſtock of thoſe pleaſures which would coſt us nothing. This was a refinement beyond me, and ſerves to evince the ſuperiority which Marguerite's virtue and force of mind ſtill retained over mine. The virtue I had ſo recently adopted was a ſtrenuous effort. I rather reſolved to be happy, than could ſtrictly be ſaid to be happy. I loved my children indeed with an unfeigned affection. It was with ſincerity that I profeſſed to prefer them to all earthly poſſeſſions. But vanity and oſtentation were habits wrought into my ſoul, and might be ſaid to form part of its eſſence. I could not, but by the force of conſtant recollection, keep them out of my wiſhes and hopes for the future. I could not, like Marguerite, ſuffer my thoughts, as it were, to riot and wanton in the pleaſures of poverty. I could only reconcile myſelf to my fate by a ſort of gloomy firmneſs. The tranquillity I ſeemed to have attained, was an unnatural ſtate of my ſoul, to which it was neceſſary that I ſhould reſolutely hold myſelf down, and from which my thoughts appeared ever upon the alert to eſcape. Bitter experience had at length taught me a hard leſſon, and that leſſon I was determined to practiſe, whatever pangs my reſignation might coſt me.

We proceeded without heſitation in the direction we had reſolved to purſue. Our whole journey exceeded the ſpace of forty leagues in extent, and the expence neceſſarily attendant upon it, (our family, even after its reduction, conſiſting of no leſs than ſix perſons) drained our purſe of a great part of the money which had been ſupplied to us by the benevolent ſenator. But he had agreed to undertake the diſpoſing of the property we were obliged to leave behind us, and in the mean time, if any conſiderable interval occurred before that

was

was accompliſhed, to furniſh us with the ſums that ſhould be neceſſary for our ſubſiſtence. We placed the utmoſt reliance upon his fidelity, and diſmiſſed from our minds all anxiety reſpecting the interval which our baniſhment had interpoſed between us and the reſources neceſſary for our future ſettlement.

Upon our arrival at Conſtance, we found a letter from our friend; and, though he tranſmitted to us no freſh ſupply, the complexion of his communication was, upon the whole, ſo encouraging as to determine us, with no other delay than that of four days reſt from our journey, to paſs to the other ſide of the lake, and explore for ourſelves a ſituation ſuitable to our deſign. The weſtern bank of the lake, with the exception only of the city of Conſtance, was part of the *pays conquis* of the United Cantons; the eaſtern bank was a territory dependent on the government of that city. It was in this territory that we purpoſed fixing our reſidence; and we truſted that our affairs would ſhortly be put in a train to enable us to take poſſeſſion of the ſpot we ſhould ſelect.

Thus driven once more into flight by the preſſure of misfortune, and compelled to exchange for a land unknown the ſcenes which familiarity might have endeared, or tender recollections have made intereſting, we did not ſink under the weight of our adverſity. This removal was not like our laſt. Switzerland was to none of us endeared like the vales of St. Leon. I was not now goaded and tormented by conſcious guilt in the degree I had then been; Marguerite was not afflicted by the ſpectacle of my miſery. Our preſent change, though it might be denominated a fall, was light in compariſon with the former. The compoſure I had gained was new to me, and had to my own mind

all

all the gloſs of novelty. To my companions it proved contagious; they were aſtoniſhed at my ſerenity, and drew from it an unwonted lightneſs of heart.

Thus circumſtanced, our tour had its charms for us all, and there are few paſſages of my life that I have felt more agreeably. The lake itſelf is uncommonly beautiful, and its environs are fertile and intereſting. It is ſurrounded with an abundance of towns, villages, country-ſeats and monaſteries, ſufficient to adorn and diverſify the ſcene, but not to exclude the ſweetneſs of a rural ſcenery, or the grand features of nature. We coaſted a conſiderable part of the lake, that we might judge in ſome degree, previous to our landing, which part of the ſhore promiſed beſt to yield us the object we ſought. The autumn was now commencing; the air was liquid and ſweet; the foilage was rich and varied; and the vine-covered hills exhibited a warmth and luxuriance of colouring, that no other object of nature or art is able to cope with. Surrounded with theſe objects, I ſat in my boat in the midſt of my children; and, as I was but juſt awakened to an obſervation of their worth and my own happineſs, I viewed them with a tranſport that would be ill illuſtrated by being compared with the tranſport of a miſer over his new-recovered treaſure from the bowels of the deep.

Oh, poverty! exclaimed I, with elevated and unconquerable emotion, if theſe are the delights that attend thee, willingly will I reſign the pomp of palaces and the ſplendour of rank to whoever ſhall deem them worth his acceptance! Henceforth I deſire only to dedicate myſelf to the ſimplicity of nature and the genuine ſentiments of the heart. I will enjoy the beauty of ſcenes cultivated by other hands than mine, or that are ſpread out before me by the author of the univerſe. I will ſit in the midſt of my children, and revel in the luxury of

domeſtic

domeſtic affections; pleaſures theſe, that may be incumbered, but cannot be heightened, by all that wealth has in its power to beſtow! Wealth ſerves no other purpoſe than to deprave the ſoul, and adulterate the fountains of genuine delight.

Such was the ſpirit of exultation with which my mind was at this time filled. I am ſenſible that it was only calculated to be tranſitory. I might learn to be contented; I was not formed to be ſatisfied in obſcurity and a low eſtate.

Thus happy and thus amuſed, we ſpent two days in coaſting the lake, landing frequently for the purpoſes either of variety or enquiry, and regularly paſſing the night on ſhore. On the evening of the ſecond day, we were ſtruck with the neat appearance and pleaſing ſituation of a cottage, which we diſcovered in our rambles about a mile and a half from the lake. We found that it was to be ſold, and it ſeemed preciſely to correſpond with the wiſhes we had formed. It was at a conſiderable diſtance from any populous neighbourhood, the neareſt town being that of Merſpurg, the uſual reſidence of the biſhops of Conſtance, which was diſtant from this ſpot not leſs than three leagues. The cottage was ſituated in a valley, the hills being for the moſt part crowned with rich and verdant foilage, their ſides covered with vineyards and corn, and a clear, tranſparent rivulet murmuring along from eaſt to weſt. In the diſtance a few ſimilar cottages diſcovered themſelves, and in front there was an opening between the hills, juſt wide enough to ſhew us a few ſails as they floated along the now even ſurface of the lake. We approached the cottage, and found in it only one perſon, an intereſting girl of nineteen, who had reſided there from her birth, and had been employed for the laſt four years in attendance upon the cloſing ſcene of

of her mother. Her mother had been dead only a few weeks, and ſhe was upon the point of removing, as ſhe told us, to the houſe of a brother, the beſt creature in the world, who was already married, and had a family of children. While we were talking with her, we perceived a fine boy of about eleven years of age ſkipping along the meadow. He proved to be her nephew, and haſtened to ſay that his father and Mr. Henry were juſt behind, and would be with her in a few minutes.—We waited their arrival, and it was eaſy to ſee that Mr. Henry was by no means an indifferent object in the eyes of the beautiful orphan; ſhe had probably conditioned that he ſhould permit her to remain ſingle, as long as ſhe could be of any uſe to her mother. The lovers were well ſatisfied that the girl's brother ſhould be taken aſide, that I might talk over with him the affair of the cottage. We made a tour of the fields that were part of the property of the deceaſed, and the terms of our intended purchaſe were eaſily adjuſted.

Tho' we had now accompliſhed the immediate purpoſe of our expedition, yet, as we had found unuſual exhiliaration and ſweetneſs in the objects it preſented to us, we came to a reſolution of continuing it ſtill further, and completing the circuit of the lake. We were aware that it would be vain as yet to expect to receive the money requiſite for completing our purchaſe; and, as no pleaſure, merely in the way of relaxation, could be more delightful than that we were now enjoying, ſo was it impoſſible that we could fill up our time in a more frugal manner than in this little voyage.—Our gratification was not leſs, but more perfect, becauſe it conſiſted of ſimple, inartifical, unbought amuſements. The ſcenes around us were refreſhing and invigorating; they were calculated, temporarily

porarily all east, to inspire gaiety and youth into decrepitude itself. Amidst these scenes we forgot our sorrows; they were a kind of stream, in which weariness and dejection plunged their limbs, and came forth untired and alert. They awakened in the mind all its most pleasing associations. Having already, as we believed, chosen the scene of our future residence, we busied ourselves in imagining all the accompaniments that would grow out of it. We determined that poverty with health would not fail to be attended with its portion of pleasures. The scenes of nature were all our own; nor could wealth give them a more perfect, or a firmer, appropriation. The affections and charities of habitude and consanguinity we trusted we should feel uninterrupted; unincumbered with the ceremonies and trappings of life, and in that rural plainness which is their genial soil.

After a leisurely and delightful voyage of six days, we returned to Constance. We expected to have found on our return some further intelligence from the beneficent senator, but in this we were disappointed. The imagination however easily suggested to us a variety of circumstances that might have delayed the business he had undertaken; and it was no forced inference to suppose that he deferred writing, because he had nothing important to communicate. At first therefore we suffered little uneasiness from the delay; but, as time proceeded, and the silence of our protector continued, the affair began to assume a more serious aspect. The little stock we had brought with us in our exile, was in a rapid progress of decay. We had managed it with frugality, though not at first with that anxious solicitude, the necessity of which we now began to apprehend. We had procured for ourselves

two

two ſmall and inconvenient apartments in an obſcure alley of the city of Conſtance. We were in the act of meditating what ſteps it would be neceſſary to take in this unfortunate emergency, when intelligence was brought us of the ſudden deceaſe of the perſon upon whoſe kindneſs and exertions we depended.

He was ſucceeded in his eſtate by his nephew, a man of whom we had heard ſomething during our reſidence in the neighbourhood, and whoſe habits we underſtood to be diametrically the reverſe of his predeceſſor's. In ſhort, he had been repreſented to us as illiberal, moroſe, ſelfiſh and litigious, a man who, having ſuffered in one part of his life the hardſhips of poverty, ſcrupled no means, honourable or otherwiſe, of removing it to the greateſt practicable diſtance. He had already reaped the ſucceſſion ſome weeks, when we heard of the event that put him in poſſeſſion of it; and the letters which I had more than once addreſſed to our protector, had probably fallen into his hands. Theſe circumſtances afforded no favourable augury of the treatment we might expect from him. The firſt thing which ſeemed proper was to write to him, which I accordingly did. I acquainted him with the nature of the tranſaction between myſelf and his uncle, and ſignified how neceſſary it was that we ſhould come to a concluſion as ſpeedily as poſſible. I repreſented to him pathetically the condition to which I was born, and the opulence in which I had paſſed many years of my life, together with the contraſt afforded by the preſent reduced and urgent circumſtances of my family. I entreated him to exert his generoſity and juſtice in behalf of an unfortunate exile, whom untoward events had deprived of the power of doing juſtice to himſelf.

To

To this letter I received no anſwer. Uncertain as to the cauſe of my correſpondent's ſilence, or even whether my letter had been received, I wrote again. My heart was wrung with this new adverſity. I was forbidden under pain of perpetual impriſonment to return to the territories of the republic, and I had no friend to ſolicit in my behalf. In Conſtance I was utterly a ſtranger. In Switzerland my unfortunate habits of life, the depreſſion and ſolitude in which I had been merged, deprived me of the opportunity of forming connections. The deceaſed was the only perſon who had been diſpoſed to interfere for me. It was too probable that the ſilence of his ſucceſſor was an indication of the hoſtility of his views. I ſaw nothing before me but the proſpect of my family periſhing with want, deprived of their laſt reſource, exiles and pennyleſs. Thus deſtitute and forlorn, what could we do; to what plan could we have recourſe? We had not ſo much as the means of providing ourſelves with the implements of the humbleſt labour. If we had, could I, under my circumſtances, reſolve upon this? Could I give up the laſt ſlender pittance of my children while there was a chance of recovering it; and, by ſurrendering them to the ſlavery of perpetual labour, ſurrender them to the loweſt degree of ignorance and degradation? No; I ſtill clung to this final hope, and was reſolved to undertake any thing, however deſperate, rather than part with it. Such were my feelings; and, in the new letter which I now diſpatched, I poured out all the anguiſh of my ſoul.

A reply to this letter was at length vouchſafed. The heir of my protector informed me, that he knew nothing of the buſineſs to which I alluded; that

that he had come into poſſeſſion of the lands I deſcribed, together with the other property of his late uncle, and regarded himſelf as holding them by the ſame tenure; that he found in the accounts of the eſtate a ſum of money advanced to me, which he might with the ſtricteſt juſtice regard as a debt, and purſue me for it accordingly. He ſhould be liberal enough however ſo far to give credit to my ſtory, and to conſider the ſum in queſtion as advanced upon a pledge of land: in that caſe, I might regard myſelf as ſufficiently fortunate, in having obtained even that amount at a time when, but for the humanity or weakneſs of his uncle, my eſtate would not have ſold for a farthing. Meanwhile the forbearance which he proffered, would, he obſerved, depend upon my conduct, and be retracted, if I afforded him cauſe for reſentment. He added, that he deſpiſed my menaces and commands, and that, if I took a ſingle ſtep againſt him, I ſhould find it terminate in my utter ruin.

Nothing could be more profligate than the ſtyle of his letter. But its importance was equal to its wickedneſs. It was abſurd to threaten to inflict ruin, on a man whom ruin had already overtaken. Before the letter arrived, I had diſburſed the whole ſum I brought with me from Switzerland. This entire annihilation of my reſources ſeemed to ſteal on me unperceived. Finding that all reply to my importunity was either refuſed, or deferred to an uncertain period, I would willingly at all riſks have ſought the villain who thus obdurately devoted me and my family to deſtruction, and have endeavoured to obtain juſtice in perſon. But it was now too late. Before I felt the caſe thus deſperate, my finances were ſo far reduced, as to make it im-

practicable for me to leave my wife and children enough to ſupport them in my abſence, even if I had determined myſelf to ſet out upon this perilous expedition pennyleſs. I reſolved that, if we did periſh, we would periſh together.

Penury was now advancing upon us with ſuch rapid ſtrides, that the loweſt and moſt ſcanty reſources no longer admitted of neglect. Had a caſe thus deſperate been encountered with timely attention, it is not improbable that ſome of the various talents I had acquired in the courſe of my education, would have furniſhed me with a means of ſubſiſtence, not altogether plebeian or incompetent. But, with the uncertainty of my ſituation, and totally unaccuſtomed as I was to regard my perſon or mind as a machine fitted for productive labour, I had not looked to this queſtion, till the urgency of the caſe deprived me of every advantage I might otherwiſe have ſeized. I was glad therefore to have recourſe to menial occupation, and ſought employment under the gardener of the epiſcopal palace, for whoſe ſervice I was ſufficiently qualified by my ten years' retreat in the Bordelois. That I might better adapt myſelf to the painful neceſſity of my ſituation, I previouſly exchanged ſome of my own clothes for garments more ſuitable to the buſineſs I now ſolicited. It was not till I had arrived within a very few days to the end of my reſources, that even this expedient, by a ſort of accident, recurred to my mind. Marguerite, though fully aware of the urgency of the caſe, had, as ſhe afterwards told me, impoſed on herſelf a compulſory ſilence, fearing for the inflamed and irritated frame of my mind, and aware that the courſe of events would ultimately lead me to a point, with which ſhe dreaded to intermeddle.

This

This was for her a trying moment; my lately-recovered ſanity obliging her to contemplate in ſilence our growing diſtreſs, and to wait the attack of hunger and want that threatened to deſtroy us, with an apparent tranquillity and chearfulneſs.

For me, ſo entire a revolution had taken place in my ſentiments, that I ſpurned with contempt, ſo far as related to myſelf, that pride of rank and romantic gallantry of honour, which had formerly been my idols. I ſubmitted with a ſort of gloomy contentment to the ſituation upon which my deſtiny drove me. I regarded it as the natural reſult of my former miſconduct; and derived a ſentiment of eaſe and relief, from thus expiating, as it were with the ſweat of my brow, the temptations to which I had yielded. Had I been myſelf only reduced thus low, or had the produce of my labour been ſufficient to purchaſe competence for my wife and the means of inſtruction for my family, I can ſafely affirm that I ſhould have found no conſequence ſo direct from my own degradation, as the means of ſilencing the reproaches of conſcience and reconciling me to myſelf. But, when I returned in the evening with the earnings of my day's labour, and found it incompetent to the procuring for thoſe who depended on me the ſimpleſt means of ſubſiſtence, then indeed my ſenſations were different. My heart died within me. I did not return after the fatigues of the day, which, to me who had not been accuſtomed to unremitted labour, and who now began to feel that I was not ſo young as I had been at the ſiege of Pavia, were extremely trying—I did not return, I ſay, to a night of repoſe. I became a very woman, when I looked forward, and endeavoured to picture to myſelf the future ſituation of my family. I watered my pillow with my tears. Often, when I

imagined that my whole family were aſleep, I gave vent to my perturbed and diſtracted mind in groans: Marguerite would ſometimes overhear me, and, with the gentleſt ſuggeſtions of her admirable mind, would endeavour to ſoothe my thoughts to peace. For the preſent, as I have ſaid, my earnings were incompetent, and we found it neceſſary to ſupply the deficiency by the ſale of the few garments, not in immediate uſe, that we ſtill poſſeſſed. What then would be the caſe when theſe were gone, and when, in addition to this, it would be neceſſary to purchaſe, not only food to eat, and a roof to ſhelter, but alſo clothes to cover us?

CHAP X.

THESE were deficiences that I anxiouſly anticipated; but there was another evil, upon which I had not calculated, that was ſtill nearer and more overwhelming. The mode of life in which I was now engaged, ſo different from any thing to which I had been accuſtomed, exceſſive fatigue, together with the occaſional heat of the weather, the uneaſineſs of my mind, and the ſleepleſſneſs of my nights, all combined to throw me into a fever, which, though it did not laſt long, had raged ſo furiouſly during the period of its continuance, as to leave me in a ſtate of the moſt complete debility. While the diſorder was upon me, I was ſenſible of my danger; and, as the brilliant and conſolatory proſpects of life ſeemed for ever cloſed upon me, I at firſt regarded my approaching diſſolution with complacency, and longed to be releaſed from a ſeries of woes, in which I had been originally involved by

my

my own folly. This frame of mind however was of no great duration; the more nearly I contemplated the idea of ſeparation from thoſe I loved, the ſmaller was my reſignation. I was unwilling to quit thoſe dear objects by which I ſtill held to this mortal ſcene; I ſhrunk with averſion from that barrier which ſeparates us from all that is new, myſterious and ſtrange. Another train of ideas ſucceeded this, and I began to deſpiſe myſelf for my impatience and cowardice. It was by my vices that my family was involved in a long train of misfortunes; could I ſhrink from partaking what I had not feared to create? The greater were the adverſities for which they were reſerved, the more ought I to deſire to ſuffer with them. I had already committed the evil; in what remained, it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe I ſhould prove their benefactor and not their foe. It was incumbent on me to ſoothe and animate them, to enrich their minds with chearfulneſs and courage, and to ſet before them an example of philoſophy and patience. By my faculties of induſtry I was their principal hope; and, whatever we might ſuffer combined, it was probable their ſufferings would be infinitely greater, if deprived of my aſſiſtance. Theſe reflections gave me energy; and it ſeemed as if the reſolute predilection I had conceived for life, contributed much to my recovery.

One thing which ſtrongly confirmed the change my mind underwent in this reſpect, was a converſation that I over-heard, at a time when I was ſuppoſed to be completely in a ſtate of inſenſibility, but when, though I was too much reduced to give almoſt any tokens of life, my faculties of hearing and underſtanding what paſſed around me, were entire. Charles came up to my bed-ſide, laid his hand upon mine as if to feel the ſtate of

the

the ſkin, and with a handkerchief that was near, wiped away the moiſture that bedewed my face. He had been fitted for many nurſe-like offices by the unwearied attention he had exerted towards me in the paroxyſm of my inſanity. Having finiſhed his taſk, he withdrew from the bed and burſt into tears. His mother came up to him, drew him to the furtheſt part of the room, and in a low voice began the converſation.

Do, my dear boy, go down ſtairs, and get yourſelf ſomething to eat. You ſee, your papa is quiet now.

I am afraid that will not laſt long, and then he will be ſo reſtleſs, and toſs about ſo, it is dreadful to ſee him.

I will watch, Charles, and let you know.

Indeed, mamma, I cannot eat now. I will by and by.

You muſt try to eat, Charles, or elſe you will make yourſelf quite ill. If you were ill too, it would be more than I could ſupport.

I will not be ill, mamma. I aſſure you I will not. But beſides that I have no ſtomach, I cannot bear to eat, when there is hardly enough for my ſiſters.

Eat, boy, do not trouble yourſelf about that. We ſhall get more when that is gone. God is good, and will take care of us.

I know that God is good, but, for all that, one muſt not expect to have every thing one wiſhes. Though God is good, there are dreadful misfortunes in the world, and I ſuppoſe we ſhall have our ſhare of them.

Come, Charles, though you are but a boy, you are the beſt boy in the world. You are now almoſt my only comfort, but you will not be able to comfort me, if you do not take care of yourſelf.

Dear

Dear mamma!—Do you know, mamma, I heard that naughty man below ſtairs count up laſt night how much rent you owed him for, and ſwear you ſhould not ſtay any longer, if you did not pay him. If I were a little bigger, I would talk to him ſo that he ſhould not dare to inſult us in our diſtreſs. But, not being big enough, I opened the door and went into the room, and begged him for God's ſake not to add to your diſtreſs. And though he is ſo ugly, I took hold of his hand and kiſſed it. But it felt like iron, which put me in mind of his iron heart, and I cried ready to burſt with mortification. He did not ſay hardly a word.

He muſt be paid, Charles: he ſhall be paid.

Do you know, mamma, as ſoon as I left him, I went to the biſhop's gardens, and ſpoke to the gardener. I aſked him if he had heard that my papa was ill, and he ſaid, he had. He ſaid too, he was very ſorry, and wanted to know what hand we made of it for want of the wages. I told him we were ſadly off, and the man of the houſe had juſt been affronting me about his rent. But, ſays I, cannot you give me ſomething to do, to weed or to rake? I can dig a little too, and ſcatter ſeed. He aſked, if I knew weeds from flowers? Oh, that I do! ſaid I. Well, then, ſaid he, there is not much you can do, but you are a good boy, and I will put you on the biſhop's liſt. But now, mamma, I have not the heart to work, till I ſee whether papa will get well again.

While poor Charles told his artleſs tale, Marguerite wept over him, and kiſſed him again and again. She called him the beſt child in the world, and ſaid that, if I were but ſo fortunate as to recover, with ſuch a huſband and ſuch a ſon, ſhe ſhould yet be the happieſt of women.

Oh,

Oh, my poor father! exclaimed Charles. Ever ſince the great hail-ſtorm, I have every hour loved him better than before. I thought that was impoſſible, but he is ſo gentle, ſo kind, ſo good-humoured and ſo patient! I loved him when he was harſh, and when he was out of his mind, but nothing ſo well then as I have done ſince. People that are kind and ſmile, always do one good; but nobody's ſmiles are like my father's. It makes me cry with joy ſometimes, when I do but think of them. Pray, papa, added he, coming up to the bed-ſide, and whiſpering, yet with a hurried and paſſionate accent, get well! Do but get well, and we will be ſo happy! Never was there a family ſo happy or ſo loving as we will be!

While he ſpoke thus, I endeavoured to put out my hand, but I could not; I endeavoured to ſmile, but I was unable: my heart was in a feeble, yet ſoothing tranquillity. The accents of love I had heard, dwelt upon my memory. They had talked of diſtreſs, but the ſentiment of love was uppermoſt in my recollection. I was too weak of frame, to ſuffer intellectual diſtreſs; no accents but thoſe which carried balm to my ſpirit, ſeemed capable of reſting upon my ear. From this hour, I regularly grew better, and, as I recovered, ſeemed to feel more and more vividly how enviable it was to be the head of a loving and harmonious family.

My recovery however was exceedingly ſlow, and it was ſeveral weeks before I had ſo far recruited my ſtrength as to be capable of my ordinary occupations. In the mean time the pecuniary difficulties to which we were expoſed, hourly encreaſed; and the chearful, but inſignificant, labours of Charles could contribute little to the ſupport of a family. The melancholy nature of our ſituation might perhaps have been expected

to

to prevent the reſtoration of my health. At firſt however it had not that effect. It ſeemed as if the debilitated ſtate of my animal functions led me, by a ſort of irreſiſtible inſtinct, to reject ideas and reflections which I ſhould then have been unable to endure. I ſaw the anxiety and affection of my family, and I was comforted. I ſaw the ſmiles of Marguerite, and I ſeemed inſenſible to the languor, the ſaddened chearfulneſs they expreſſed. I did not perceive that, while I was provided with every thing neceſſary in my condition, my family were in want of the very bread that ſhould ſuſtain exiſtence.

My health in the mean time improved, and my perceptions became proportionably clearer. Symptoms of deſolation and famine, though as much as poſſible covered from my ſight, obtruded themſelves, and were remarked. One day in particular I obſerved various tokens of this nature in ſilence, and with that ſort of bewildered underſtanding, which at once labours for comprehenſion, and reſiſts belief. The day cloſed; and what I had perceived, preſſed upon my mind, and excluded ſleep. Now for the firſt time I exerted myſelf to recollect in a methodical way the ſtate of my affairs; for the ſeverity of my ills had at length ſucceeded to baniſh from me all ideas and all feelings, but what related to the ſenſations it produced and the objects around me; and it was not without effort that I could once more fully call to mind the ſcenes in which I had been engaged. The truth then by regular degrees roſe completely to view; and I began to be aſtoniſhed that my poor wife and children had been able in any manner to get through the horrible evils to which they muſt have been expoſed. This thought I revolved in my mind for near two hours; and the longer

I dwelt upon it, the more perturbed and reſtleſs I grew. At length it became impoſſible for me to hold my contemplations pent up in my own boſom. I turned to Marguerite, and aſked her, whether ſhe were aſleep.

She anſwered in the negative: ſhe had been remarking my reſtleſſneſs, and tenderly enquired reſpecting its cauſe.

How long, ſaid I, is it ſince I was taken with the fever?

A month to-morrow, replied ſhe. It was of the moſt malignant and diſtreſſing kind, while it laſted. And I did not expect you to live. But it has left you a fortnight, and I hope, Reginald, you find yourſelf getting ſtrong again.

And ſo we are here in Conſtance, and we have left Switzerland?—

Three months, my love!

I remember very well the letter we received from Monſieur Grimfeld; has any further intelligence reached us from that quarter?

None.

None! No ſupply of any kind has reached you?

My dear Reginald, talk of ſomething elſe! You will ſoon, I hope, be well! our children are all alive; and the calamity, that has not ſucceeded to ſeparate us, or diminiſh our circle of love, even by a ſingle member, we will learn to bear. Let us fix our attention on the better proſpects that open before us!

Stay, Marguerite! I have other queſtions to aſk. Before you require me to bear the calamities that have overtaken us, let me underſtand what theſe calamities are. While we waited for intelligence from Switzerland, we expended the whole ſum that we brought with us, and I was obliged to

hire

hire myſelf to the epiſcopal gardener for bread; was it not ſo?

Indeed, Reginald, you are to blame! Pray, queſtion me no further!

This was our condition ſome time ago; and now, for a month paſt, I have been incapable of labour. Marguerite, what have you done?

Indeed, my love, I have been too anxious for you, to think much of any thing elſe. We had ſtill ſome things, you know, that we could contrive to do without, and thoſe I have ſold. Charles too, our excellent-hearted ſon, has lately hired himſelf to the gardener, and has every night brought us home a little, though it was but little.

Dear boy! What children, what a wife I have brought to deſtruction! Our rent too, ſurely you have not been able to pay that?

Not entirely. In part I have been obliged to pay it.

Ah, I well remember how ſtinty-hearted a wretch has got the power over us in that reſpect!

He has not turned us out of doors. He threatened hard ſeveral times. At laſt I ſaw it was neceſſary to make an effort, and the day before yeſterday I paid him half his demand. If I could have avoided that, we might have had a ſupply of food a little longer. I entreated earneſtly for a little further indulgence, but it was in vain. It went againſt the pride and independence of my ſoul to ſue to this man, but it was for you and for my children!

Remorſeleſs wretch! Then every petty reſource we had is gone?

Indeed I do not know that we have any thing more to ſell. I ſearched narrowly yeſterday; but I will examine again to-day. The poor children muſt have ſomething to ſupport them, and their fare has of late been dreadfully ſcanty.

Their

Their fare! What have they eaten?

Bread; nothing elſe for the laſt fortnight!

And yourſelf?

Oh, Reginald! it was neceſſary, you know, that I ſhould keep myſelf alive. But, I aſſure you, I have robbed them as little as I could!

Horror, horror! Marguerite, what is it you dream of? I ſee my wife and children dying of hunger, and you talk to me of hope and of proſpects! Why has this detail of miſeries been concealed from me! Why have I been ſuffered, with accurſed and unnatural appetite, to feed on the vitals of all I love!

Reginald! even ſelfiſhneſs itſelf would have taught us that! It is to your recovery that we look for our future ſupport!

Mock me not, I adjure you, with ſenſeleſs words! You talk idly of the future, while the tremendous preſent bars all proſpect to that future! We are periſhing by inches! We have no proviſion for the coming day! No, no; ſomething deſperate, ſomething yet unthought of, muſt be attempted! I will not ſit inactive, and ſee my offſpring around me die in ſucceſſion. No, by heaven! Though I am ſtarving like Ugolino, I am not like Ugolino ſhut up in a dungeon! The world is open; its ſcenes are wide; the reſources it offers are to the bold and deſpairing, innumerable! I am a father, and will ſhew myſelf worthy of the name!

Reginald! torture me not by language like this! Think what it is to be indeed a father, and make yourſelf that! Be careful of yourſelf; complete your recovery—and leave the reſt to me! I have conducted it thus far, nor am I yet without hope. Eight days ago I applied to the ſecretary of the palace, repreſenting your caſe as a retainer of the biſhop, diſabled by ſickneſs, and with a family

family unprovided for. Till yeſterday I got no anſwer to my memorial, and then he informed me, that you had been ſo ſhort a time in employ, that nothing could be done for you. But to-day I will throw myſelf at the feet of the biſhop himſelf, who arrived laſt night only from the other ſide of the lake.

Every word that Marguerite uttered, went to my heart. It was not long before the dawn of the day, and the truths I had heard were further confirmed to me by the organ of ſight. The ſentiments of this night produced a total revolution in me, and I was no longer the feeble convaleſcent that the ſetting ſun of the preceding day had left me. The film was removed from my eyes, and I ſurveyed not the objects around me with a glaſſy eye and unapprehenſive obſervation. All the powers I poſſeſſed were alert and in motion. To my ſuſpicions and hurried gaze the apartment appeared as if ſtripped of its moveables, and left naked a manſion in which for deſpair to take up his abode. My children approached me; I ſeemed to read the wan and emaciated traces of death in their countenances. This perhaps was in ſome degree the painting of my too conſcious thoughts. But there needed no exaggeration to awaken torture in my boſom, when, thus ſtimulated, I obſerved for the firſt time the dreadful change that had taken place in Marguerite. Her colour was gone; her cheeks were ſunk; her eye had the quickneſs and diſcompoſure expreſſive of debility. I took hold of her hand, and found it cold, emaciated and white. I preſſed it to my lips with agony; a tear unbidden fell from my eye, and reſted upon it. Having finiſhed my examination, I took my hat, and was haſtening to eſcape into the ſtreet. Marguerite noted my motions, and anxiouſly

anxiouſly interpoſed to prevent my deſign. She laid her hand on my arm, gently, yet in a manner full of irreſiſtible expoſtulation.

Where would you go? What have you purpoſed? Do not—Oh, do not, deſtroy a family, to whom your life, your ſobriety and prudence are indiſpenſible!

I took her hand within both mine. Compoſe yourſelf, my love! I have been your enemy too much already, to be capable now, ſo much as in thought, of adding to my guilt! I need an interval for muſing and determination. I will return in a very ſhort time, and you ſhall be the confident of my thoughts!

With wild and impatient ſpirit I repaſſed in idea the whole hiſtory of my life. But principally I dwelt in recollection upon the marquis of Damville, that generous friend, that munificent benefactor, whoſe confidence I had ſo ill repaid. Damville! exclaimed I, you truſted to me your daughter, the deareſt thing you knew on earth; you believed that the wretch did not live who could be unjuſt to ſo rich a pledge. Look down, look down, oh, beſt of men! from the heaven to which your virtues have raiſed you, and ſee of how much baſeneſs man, yes, the man you diſdained not to call your friend, is capable! But, no! a ſight like this might well convert the heaven you dwell in to hell! You truſted her to me; I have robbed her! You enriched her mind with the nobleſt endowments; I have buried them in the mire of the vileſt condition! All her generous, her unwearied exertions are fruitleſs; by my evil genius they are blaſted! I have made her a mother, only that ſhe might behold her children periſhing with hunger! They ſtretch out their hands to me for the ſmalleſt portion of

that

that inheritance, which I have ſquandered in more than demoniac vice! This, this is the fruit of my miſdeeds! I am now draining the laſt dregs of that miſchief, of which I have ſo wickedly, ſo baſely been the author!

As I returned, I met Marguerite, who was come from her attempt upon the biſhop. He had received her paper, and delivered it to his ſecretary, that very ſecretary who had already diſappointed all her expectations from that quarter. She had attempted to ſpeak, to adjure the biſhop, whatever he did, not to deliver her over to a man by whom her hopes had been ſo cruelly fruſtrated; but the tumult of the ſcene drowned her voice, and the hurry and confuſion overpowered her efforts. They however drew ſuch a degree of attention on her, that, in the diſſentions which religious broils at that time ſpread in Conſtance, ſhe was ſuſpected of preſſing thus earneſtly towards the perſon of the biſhop with no good deſign, and in fine was rudely thruſt out of the palace. She had not recovered from the agitation into which ſhe had been thrown, when I met her. I eagerly enquired into the cauſe of her apparent diſtreſs; but ſhe ſhook her head mournfully, and was ſilent. I eaſily underſtood where ſhe had been, and the failure of her experiment.

All then, ſaid I, is at an end. Now, Marguerite, you muſt give up your experiments, and leave to me the cure of evils of which I only am the author. I will return this inſtant to the garden of the palace, and reſume the ſituation I formerly occupied.

For God's ſake, Reginald, what is it you mean? You have juſt acquired ſtrength to ſeek the benefit of air. The leaſt exertion fatigues you. At this moment, the little walk you have taken has

covered

covered you with preſpiration. You could not dig or ſtoop for a quarter of an hour without being utterly exhauſted.

Marguerite, I will not ſit down tamely, and ſee my family expire. In many caſes it is reaſonable to bid a valetudinarian take care of himſelf. But our ſituation is beyond that. I muſt do ſomething. Extraordinary circumſtances often bring along with them extraordinary ſtrength. No man knows, till the experiment, what he is capable of effecting. I feel at this moment no debility; and I doubt not that the deſpair of my mind will give redoubled energy to my efforts.

While I ſpoke thus, I was conſcious that I had little more than the ſtrength of a new-born child. But I could not endure at ſuch a time to remain in inactivity. I felt as much aſhamed of the debilitated ſtate in which my fever had left me, as I could have done of the moſt inglorious effeminacy and cowardice of ſoul. I was determined to relieve my family, or periſh in the attempt. If all my efforts were vain, I could not better finiſh my career, than exhauſted, ſinking, expiring under a laſt exertion to diſcharge the duties of my ſtation.

We returned into the houſe. Marguerite took from a cloſet the laſt remnant of proviſions we had, the purchaſe of poor Charles's labour of the preceding day. There was a general conteſt who ſhould eſcape from receiving any part in the diſtribution. Charles had withdrawn himſelf, and was not to be found. Julia endeavoured to abſcond, but was ſtopped by Louiſa and her mother. She had wept ſo much, that inanition ſeemed more dangerous for her, than perhaps for any other of the circle. No one can conceive, who has not felt it, how affecting a conteſt of this kind muſt appear to me, ſenſible as I was to the danger that

their

their virtue and generous affection were the prelude only to their common deſtruction. I ſaid, There was a general conteſt who ſhould avoid all ſhare in the diſtribution; but I recollect that the little Marguerite, two years and a half old, exclaimed at firſt, I am ſo hungry, mamma! But, watching, as ſhe carefully did, every thing that paſſed, ſhe preſently laid down her bread upon the table, in ſilence, and almoſt untouched; and, being aſked, Why ſhe did ſo? ſhe replied in a tone of ſpeaking ſenſibility, Thank you, I am not hungry now!

This ſcene made an impreſſion on my mind, never to be forgotten. It blaſted and corrupted all the pulſes of my ſoul. A little before, I had reconciled myſelf to poverty; I had even brought myſelf to regard it with chearfulneſs. But the ſentiment was now reverſed. I could endure it, I could ſteel myſelf againſt its attacks; but never from this hour, in the wildeſt paroxyſms of enthuſiaſm, has it been the topic of my exultation or my panegyric. No change of circumſtances, no inundation of wealth, has had the power to obliterate from my recollection what I then ſaw. A family periſhing with hunger; all that is deareſt to you in the world ſinking under the moſt dreadful of all the ſcourges with which this ſublunary ſcene is ever afflicted; no help near; no proſpect but of ſtill accumulating diſtreſs; a death, the ſloweſt, yet the moſt certain and the moſt agonizing, that can befal us; no, there is nothing that has power to rend all the ſtrings of the heart like this! From this moment, the whole ſet of my feelings was changed. Avarice deſcended, and took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. Haunted, as I perpetually was, by images of the plague of famine nothing appeared to me ſo valuable as wealth; nothing

nothing ſo deſirable as to be placed at the utmoſt poſſible diſtance from want. An Appetite of this kind is inſatiable; no diſtance ſeems ſufficiently great; no obſtacles, mountains on mountains of gold, appear an adequate ſecurity to bar from us the approach of the monſter we dread.

While I ſpeak of the ſentiments which in the ſequel were generated in my mind by what I now ſaw, I am ſuſpending my narrative in a criſis at which a family, intereſting, amiable and virtuous, is reduced to the loweſt ſtate of humiliation and diſtreſs.

They are moments like theſe, that harden the human heart, and fill us with inextinguiſhable hatred and contempt for our ſpecies. They tear off the trappings and decorations of poliſhed ſociety, and ſhow it in all its hideouſneſs. The wanton eye of pampered pride pleaſes itſelf with the ſpectacle of cities and palaces, the ſtately column and the ſwelling arch. It obſerves at hand the buſy ſcene, where all are occupied in the various purſuits of pleaſure or induſtry, and admires the concert, the wide-ſpreading confederacy by means of which each after his mode is unconſciouſly promoting the object of others. Cheated by the outſide of things, we denominate this a vaſt combination for general benefit. The poor and the famiſhed man contemplates the ſcene with other thoughts. Unbribed to admire and applaud, he ſees in it a confederacy of hoſtility and general oppreſſion. He ſees every man purſuing his ſelfiſh ends, regardleſs of the wants of others. He ſees himſelf contemptuouſly driven from the circle, where the reſt of his fellow-citizens are buſily and profitably engaged. He lives in the midſt of a crowd, without one friend to intereſt himſelf for his welfare. He lives in the midſt of plenty from the

the participation of which he is driven by brutal menaces and violence. No man who has not been placed in his ſituation, can imagine the ſenſations, with which, overwhelmed as he is with domeſtic ruin and deſpair, he beholds the riot, the prodigality, the idiot oſtentation, the ſenſeleſs expence, with which he is ſurrounded on every ſide. What were we to do? Were we to beg along the ſtreets? Were we to intreat for wretched offals at rich men's doors? Alas, this, it was to be feared, even if we ſtooped to the miſerable attempt, inſtead of ſatisfying wants for ever new, would only prolong in the bitterneſs of anguiſh the fate for which we were reſerved!——

An unexpected relief at this time preſented itſelf. While the ſcanty meal I have mentioned was yet unfiniſhed, a letter was preſented me incloſing under its cover a bill of one hundred crowns. The letter was from Peter, the faithful ſervant, whom we had found it neceſſary to diſmiſs three months before, when we quitted our reſidence in Switzerland. It informed us that, as ſoon as he had parted from us, he had ſet out on his return to his native town, next adjacent to my paternal reſidence; that he found his father had died a ſhort time before, and that, from the ſale of his effects, he had reaped an inheritance, to triple the amount of the ſum he had now forwarded to us. He had heard by accident of the death of our friend in Switzerland, and the character of his ſucceſſor, and dreaded that the conſequences might prove highly injurious to us. He had ſtill ſome buſineſs to ſettle with the ſurviving branches of his family, but that would be over in a few weeks, and then, if we would allow him, he would return to his dear maſter, and afford us every aſſiſtance in his power. The little property that had now fallen to him would prevent him

him from being a burthen, and he would hire a ſpot of land, and remain near us, if we refuſed him the conſolation of returning to his former employment.

What a reproach was it to me, that I, deſcended from one of the moſt illuſtrious families in Europe, the heir of an ample patrimony, and receiving a ſtill larger fortune in marriage, ſhould, by the total neglect and profligate defiance of the duties incumbent on me, have reduced myſelf ſo low, as to be indebted to a peaſant and a menial for the means of ſaving my family from inſtant deſtruction! This was a deep and fatal wound to the pride of my ſoul. There was however no alternative, no poſſibility of rejecting the ſupply afforded us at ſo eventful a moment. We determined to uſe it for the preſent, and to repay it with the earlieſt opportunity; and in the following week, in ſpite of the remonſtrances of Marguerite, and yet feeble ſtate of my health, and the penalties annexed to the proceeding, I ſet off for the canton of Soleure, determined, if poſſible, to wreſt the little ſtaff of my family from the hand that ſo baſely detained it.

I paſſed through Zurich and a part of the canton of Baſle without obſtacle; theſe parts of Switzerland had not ſuffered from the calamity which had occaſioned our exile. In proceeding further, I found it neceſſary to aſſume a diſguiſe, and to avoid large towns and frequented roads. I reached at length the well known ſcene in which I had ſo lately conſumed twelve months of my life; in which I firſt began to breathe (to breathe, not to be refreſhed) from ruin, beggary and exile. There was no pleaſing recollection annexed to this ſpot; it was a remembrancer of ſhame, ſorrow and remorſe. Yet, ſuch is the power of objects once familiar, reviſited after abſence, that my eye ran

over

over them with delight. I felt lightened from the wearineſs of the journey, and found that the recollection of pains paſt over and ſubdued was capable of being made a ſource of gratification.—The mountains among which I had wandered, and conſumed, as it were, the laſt dregs of my inſanity, ſurrounded me; the path in which I was travelling led along one of their ridges. I had performed this part of my journey by night; and the firſt gleams of day now began to ſtreak the horizon. I looked towards the cottage, the diſtant view of which had ſo often, in moments of the deepeſt deſpair, awakened in my heart the ſoothings of ſympathy and affection. I ſaw that as yet it remained in its forlorn condition, and had undergone no repair; while the lands around, which had lately experienced the ſuperintendence of Marguerite, had met with more attention, and began to reſume the marks of culture. I ſighed for the return of thoſe days and that ſituation, which, while preſent to me, had paſſed unheeded and unenjoyed.

I reprired to the houſe of my late protector, now the reſidence of monſieur Grimfeld. He was a megre, ſhrivelled figure; and, though ſcarcely arrived at the middle of human life, exhibited all the marks of a premature old age. I diſcloſed myſelf to him, and began warmly to expoſtulate with him upon the profligacy of his conduct. He changed colour, and betrayed ſymptoms of confuſion, the moment I announced myſelf.—While I preſſed him with the barbarity of his conduct, the dreadful effects it had already produced, and the inconteſtible juſtice of my claim, he ſtammered, and began to propoſe terms of accommodation. During this converſation we were alone. After ſome time however a ſervant entered the room, and the countenance of the

maſte

maſter aſſumed an expreſſion of ſatisfaction and confidence. He eagerly ſeized on the occaſion which preſented itſelf, and, inſtantly changing his tone, called on his ſervant to aſſiſt him in ſecuring a criminal againſt the ſtate. I at firſt reſiſted, but Grimfeld, perceiving this, applied to his bell with great vehemence, and three other ſervants made their appearance, whoſe employment was in the field, but who had now accidentally come into the houſe for refreſhment. I had arms; but I found it impracticable to effect my eſcape; and I ſoon felt that, by yielding to the impulſe of indignation, and puniſhing Grimfeld on the ſpot for his perfidy, I might ruin, but could not forward, the affair in which I was engaged.

I was conducted to priſon; and the thoughts produced in me by this ſudden reverſe, were extremely melancholy and diſcouraging. Grimfeld was a man of opulence and power; I was without friends, or the means of procuring friends. The law expreſsly condemned my return; and what had I not to fear from law, when abetted and inforced by the hand of power? I might be impriſoned for ten years; I might be impriſoned for life. I began earneſtly to wiſh that I had remained with my family, and given up at leaſt all preſent hopes of redreſs. It would be a dreadful accumulation of all my calamities, if now at laſt I and my children were deſtined to ſuffer, perhaps to periſh, in a ſtate of ſeparation; and the laſt conſolations of the wretched, thoſe of ſuffering, ſympathiſing and condoling with each other, were denied us.

Full of theſe tragical forebodings, I threw myſelf at firſt on the floor of my cell in a ſtate little ſhort of the moſt abſolute deſpair. I exclaimed upon my adverſe fortune, which was never weary of perſecuting me. I apoſtrophiſed, with tender

and

and diſtracted accents, my wife and children, from whom I now ſeemed to be cut off by an everlaſting divorce. I called upon death to put an end to theſe tumults and emotions of the ſoul, which were no longer to be borne.

In a ſhort time however I recovered myſelf, procured the implements of writing, and drew up, in the ſtrong and impreſſive language of truth, a memorial to the council of the ſtate. I was next to conſider how this was to reach its deſtination; for there was ſome danger that it might be intercepted by the vigilance and malignity of my adverſary. I deſired to ſpeak with the keeper of the priſon. He had ſome recollection of me, and a ſtill more diſtinct one of my family. He concurred with the general ſentiment, in a ſtrong averſion to the character of Grimfeld. As I preſſed upon him the hardſhip of my caſe, and the fatal conſequences with which it might be attended, I could perceive that he fully entered into the feeling with which I wiſhed him to be impreſſed. He blamed my raſhneſs in returning to Switzerland in defiance of the poſitive prohibition that had been iſſued; but promiſed at all events that my paper ſhould be delivered to the preſident to-morrow morning.

I remained three days without an anſwer, and theſe days were to me an eternity. I anticipated every kind of misfortune; I believed that law and malice had ſucceeded to the ſubverſion of equity. At length however I was delivered from my apprehenſions and perplexity, and ſummoned to appear before the council. It was well for me perhaps that I had to do with a government ſo ſimple and moderate as that of Switzerland. I obtained redreſs. It was referred to an arbitration of neighbours to ſet a fair price on my property,

and

and then decreed that, if monſieur Grimfeld refuſed the purchaſe, the ſum ſhould be paid me out of the coffers of the ſtate. He was alſo condemned in a certain fine for the fraud he had attempted to commit. The affair, thus put in train was ſoon completed; and I returned with joy, having effected the object of my journey, to my anxious and expecting family. Soon after we removed to the ſpot we had choſen on the eaſtern bank of the lake, where we remained for the ſix following years in a ſtate of peace and tranquillity.

CHAP. XI.

IT was in the evening of a ſummer's day in the latter end of the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, that a ſtranger arrived at my habitation. He was feeble, emaciated and pale, his forehead full of wrinkles, and his hair and beard as white as ſnow. Care was written in his face; it was eaſy to perceive that he had ſuffered much from diſtreſs of mind; yet his eye was ſtill quick and lively, with a ſtrong expreſſion of ſuſpiciouſneſs and anxiety. His garb, which externally conſiſted of nothing more than a robe of ruſſet brown, with a girdle of the ſame, was coarſe, threadbare, and ragged. He ſupported his tottering ſteps with a ſtaff; and, having loſt his foreteeth, his ſpeech was indiſtinct and difficult to be comprehended. His wretched appearance excited my compaſſion, at the ſame time that I could eaſily diſcern, beneath all its diſadvantages, that he was no common beggar or ruſtic. Ruined and ſqualid as he appeared, I thought I could perceive traces in his countenance of what had formerly been both daring enterpriſe, profound meditation, and generous humanity.

I ſaw that he was much fatigued, and I invited him to reſt himſelf upon the bench before the door. I ſet before him bread and wine, and he partook of both. I aſked him his name and his country. He told me that he was a Venetian, and that his name, as nearly as I could collect, was ſignor Franceſco Zampieri. He ſeemed however averſe to ſpeaking, and he requeſted me to ſuffer him to paſs the night in my habitation. There was nothing ſingular in the requeſt, a hoſpitality of this ſort being the practice of the neighbourhood; and humanity

would have prompted my compliance, if I had not been ſtill more ſtrongly urged by an undefinable curioſity, that began to ſpring up in my boſom. I prepared for him a camp-bed in a ſummer-houſe at the end of my garden. As ſoon as it was ready, he deſired to be left alone, that he might ſeek in reſt ſome relief from the fatigue he had undergone.

He retired early; and therefore, ſoon after day-break the next morning, I waited on him to enquire how he had reſted. He led me out into the fields; the morning was genial and exhilirating. We proceeded till we came to a retired ſpot, which had frequently been the ſcene of my ſolitary meditations, and there ſeated ourſelves upon a bank. We had been mutually ſilent during the walk. As ſoon as we were ſeated, the ſtranger began: You are, I underſtand, a Frenchman, and your name the count de St. Leon? I bowed aſſent.

St. Leon, ſaid he, there is ſomething in your countenance and manner that prepoſſeſſes me in your favour. The only thing I have left to do in the world, is to die; and what I ſeek at preſent, is a friend who will take care that I ſhall be ſuffered to die in peace. Shall I truſt you? Will you be that friend to me?

I was aſtoniſhed at this way of commencing his confidence in me; but I did not heſitate to promiſe that he ſhould not find me deficient in any thing that became a man of humanity and honour.

You do not, I think, live alone? You have a wife and children?

I have.

Yet none of them were at home when I arrived laſt night. You brought yourſelf to the ſummer-

ſummer-houſe every thing that was neceſſary for my accommodation.

I did ſo. But I have a wife to whom I have been married ſeventeen years, and from whom I have no reſerves. I told her of your arrival; I ſpoke of your appearance; I mentioned your name.

It is no matter. She has not ſeen me. My name is not Zampieri; I am no Venetian.

Who are you then?

That you ſhall never know. It makes no part of the confidence I deſign to repoſe in you. My name ſhall be buried with me in the grave; nor ſhall any one who has hitherto known me, know how, at what time, or on what ſpot of earth I ſhall terminate my exiſtence. The cloud of oblivion ſhall ſhelter me from all human curioſity. What I require of you is, that you pledge your honour and the faith of a man, that you will never reveal to your wife, your children, or any human being, what you may hereafter know of me; and that no particular that relates to my hiſtory ſhall be diſcloſed, till at leaſt one hundred years after my deceaſe.

Upon theſe conditions I am ſorry that I muſt decline your confidence. My wife is a part of myſelf; for the laſt ſix years at leaſt I have had no thought in which ſhe has not participated; and theſe have been the moſt tranquil and happy years of my life. My heart was formed by nature for ſocial ties; habit has confirmed the propenſity; and I will not now conſent to any thing that ſhall infringe on the happineſs of my ſoul.

While I ſpoke, I could perceive that my companion grew diſturbed and angry. At length, turning towards me a look of ineffable contempt, he replied:

Feeble and effeminate mortal! You are neither a knight nor a Frenchman! Or rather, having been both, you have forgotten in inglorious obſcurity every thing worthy of either! Was ever gallant action atchieved, by him who was incapable of ſeparating himſelf from a woman? Was ever a great diſcovery proſecuted, or an important benefit conferred upon the human race, by him who was incapable of ſtanding, and thinking, and feeling, alone? Under the uſurping and diſhonoured name of virtue, you have ſunk into a ſlavery baſer than that of the enchantreſs Alcina. In vain might honour, worth, and immortal renown, proffer their favours to him who has made himſelf the baſeſt of all ſublunary things, the puppet of a woman, the plaything of her pleaſure, wafting an inglorious life in the gratification of her wiſhes and the performance of her commands!

I felt that I was not wholly unmoved at this expoſtulation. The ſtranger touched upon the firſt and foremoſt paſſions of my ſoul, paſſions the operation of which had long been ſuſpended, but which were by no means extinguiſhed in my boſom. He proceeded:

But it is well! Years have paſſed over my head in vain, and I have not learned to diſtinguiſh a man of honour from a ſlave. This is only one additional ſorrow to thoſe in which my life has been ſpent. I have wandered through every region of the earth, and have found only diſappointment. I have entered the courts of princes; I have accompanied the march of armies; I have pined in the putridity of dungeons. I have taſted every viciſſitude of ſplendour and meanneſs; five times have I been led to the ſcaffold, and with difficulty eſcaped a public execution. Hated by mankind, hunted from

the face of the earth, purſued by every atrocious calumny, without a country, without a roof, without a friend; the addition that can be made to ſuch misfortunes ſcarcely deſerves a thought.

While he ſpoke, curioſity, reſiſtleſs curioſity, preſented itſelf as a new motive, in aid of the ſenſe of ſhame which the ſtranger had juſt before kindled in my boſom. His manner was inconceivably impreſſive; his voice, though inarticulate from age, had an irreſiſtible melody and volume of ſound, which awed, while it won, the heart. His front appeared open, large, and commanding; and though he complained, his complaints ſeemed to be thoſe of conſcious dignity and innocence. He went on:

Farewel, St. Leon! Igo, and you ſhall ſee me, and hear of me no more. You will repent, when it is too late, the folly of this day's determination. I appear mean and inſignificant in your eyes. You think my ſecrets not worth your curioſity, and my benefits not worth your acceptance. Know that my benefits are ſuch as kings would barter their thrones to purchaſe, and that my wealth exceeds the wealth of empires. You are degraded from the rank you once held among mankind; your children are deſtined to live in the inglorious condition of peaſants: This day you might have redeemed all your misfortunes, and raiſed yourſelf to a ſtation more illuſtrious than that to which you were born. Farewel! Deſtiny has marked out you and yours for obſcurity and oblivion, and you do well to reject magnificence and diſtinction when they proffer themſelves for your acceptance.

Stop, cried I, myſterious ſtranger! Grant me a moment's leiſure to reflect and determine!

He had riſen to depart, with a geſture of

reſolution and contempt. At my exclamation he pauſed, and again turned himſelf towards me. My ſoul was in tumults.

Anſwer me, moſt ambiguous and impenetrable of mortals! what is thy ſtory? and what the ſecrets, the diſcloſure of which is pregnant with conſequences ſo extraordinary?

Do you recollect the conditions upon which only the diſcloſure can be made?

What can I ſay? Shall I determine to part with that which for years has conſtituted the only conſolation of my life? Shall I ſuppreſs the curioſity which now torments me, and reject the boon you pretend to have the power to confer?

I grant you the interval for reflection you demand. I refuſe to place further confidence in you, till you have maturely examined yourſelf, and roufed all the energies of your ſpirit to encounter the taſk you undertake.

One word more. You know not, indeed you know not, what a woman you exclude from your confidence. She is more worthy of it than I am. Referring to my own experience and knowledge of the world, I can ſafely pronounce her the firſt of her ſex, perhaps the firſt of human beings. Indulge me in this; include her in your confidence, and I am content.

Be ſilent! I have made my determination; do you make yours! Know, I would not, if I could, and cannot, if I would, repoſe the ſecrets that preſs upon me in more than a ſingle boſom. It was upon this condition I received the communication; upon this condition only can I impart it. I am reſolved; to die is the election of my ſoul, a conſummation for which I impatiently wait. Having determined therefore to withdraw myſelf from the powers committed

mitted to me, I am at liberty to impart them; upon the ſame condition, and no other, you may one day, if you deſire it, ſeek the relief of confidence.

Having thus ſpoken, the ſtranger aroſe from his ſeat. It was yet early morning, nor was it likely we ſhould meet any one in our walk. He however employed the precaution of cauſing me to explore the path, and to ſee that we ſhould return uninterrupted. We returned to the ſummer-houſe. The window-ſhutters were ſtill cloſed; the ſtranger determined they ſhould remain ſo. When I had come to him as ſoon as I roſe, I had found the door ſecured, nor had he admitted me, till he recogniſed my voice, and had aſcertained that I was alone. Theſe precautions ſcarcely excited my attention at the time; but after the converſation that had juſt paſſed, they returned diſtinctly to my memory.

The remainder of the day which had been opened by this extraordinary ſcene, was paſſed by me in great anxiety. I ruminated with unceaſing wonder and perturbation upon the words of the ſtranger. Shall I ſhut upon myſelf the gate of knowledge and information? Is it not the part of a feeble and effeminate mind to refuſe inſtruction, becauſe he is not at liberty to communicate that inſtruction to another, to a wife? The ſtranger profeſſes to be able to raiſe me to the utmoſt height of wealth and diſtinction. Shall I refuſe the gift, which in a former inſtance I forfeited, but for which, though contemplated as at an impracticable diſtance, my whole ſoul longs? If there is any thing diſhonourable connected with the participation of this wealth, I ſhall ſtill be at liberty to refuſe it. There can be no crime in hearing what this man has to communicate. I ſhall ſtill, and always, be maſ-

ter of myſelf; nor can I have any thing perſonally to fear from a man ſo feeble, ſo decrepid, ſo emaciated. Yet what can be the gifts worthy of acceptance, of a man who, while he poſſeſſes them, is tired of life, and deſires to die; or what the wealth of him who bears about him every external ſymptom of poverty and deſolation?

The converſation I had juſt held, revived in my mind the true feeling of my preſent ſituation. The wounds of my ſoul had been lulled into temporary inſenſibility; but they were in a ſtate in which the ſlighteſt accident was capable of making them bleed afreſh and with all their former violence. I had rather ſteeled my mind to endure what ſeemed unavoidable, than reconciled myſelf to my fate. The youthful paſſions of my ſoul, which my early years had written there in characters ſo deep; were by no means effaced. I could not contemplate the ſplendour of rank with an impartial eye. I could not think of the alternative of diſtinction or obſcurity for my children with indifference. But moſt of all, the moment I had experienced for them of hunger and impending deſtruction by famine, had produced an indelible impreſſion. It had deſtroyed all romance, I had almoſt ſaid all dignity, in my mind for ever. It had ſnapped, as by the touch of a red-hot iron, all the finer and more etherialiſed nerves of my frame. It had planted the ſordid love of gold in my heart, there, by its baneful vegetation, to poiſon its nobler and more ſalubrious feelings.

When I returned to the houſe, Marguerite enquired of me reſpecting the ſtranger, but my anſwers were ſhort and embarraſſed. She ſeemed to wonder that he did not come into the houſe and partake of ſome refreſhment in the

midſt

midſt of my family. She aſked, whether he were indiſpoſed, and whether he did not ſtand in need of ſome aſſiſtance that ſhe might afford him? Perceiving however that I was deſirous of ſaying as little as poſſible reſpecting him, ſhe preſently became ſilent. I could ſee that ſhe was hurt at my incommunicativeneſs, yet I could not prevail upon myſelf to enter into an explanation of the cauſes of my taciturnity. Ours was a family of love, and I could obſerve that the children ſympathiſed with their mother, and ſecretly were ſurpriſed at, and lamented my reſerve. There would have been little in this, in perhaps any other family but ours. But the laſt ſix years had been ſpent by us in ſuch primeval ſimplicity, that ſcarcely one of us had a thought but what was known to the reſt. Marguerite cheriſhed my frankneſs and unreſerve with peculiar zeal; ſhe remembered with bitterneſs of ſoul the periods in which I foſtered conceptions only proper to myſelf, periods of dreadful calamity, or of rooted melancholy and ſadneſs. She could not help regarding the ſilence into which for the preſent occaſion I relapſed, as a portent of evil augury. Charles, who was now fixteen years of age, recollected the period of our ruined fortunes, when he had been alone with me at Paris, and partook of his mother's feelings.

A trifling circumſtance, at this time, occaſioned by the little Marguerite, now eight years of age, rendered the reſtraint under which I laboured more memorable and ſtriking. She had left a little book of fairy tales, in which ſhe had been reading the day before, in the ſummer-houſe. At firſt ſhe did not recollect what was become of it, and employed herſelf in ſearching for it with great aſſiduity. Of a ſudden however ſhe remembered where ſhe had read in

it laſt; and, exclaiming with exultation, it is in the ſummer-houſe! ſprang forward to fetch it. I detained her, and told her there was a ſick gentleman there that ſhe would diſturb. Then, dear Julia! rejoined ſhe, be ſo good as to get it for me; you are ſo quiet and ſo careful, you never diſturb any body.

My love, anſwered I, nobody muſt get it for you. The gentleman chooſes to be alone, and will not let any body come to him. You ſhall have it after dinner.

Ah, but, papa, I want it now. I put it away juſt where the naughty giant had ſhut up the gentleman in the dungeon, who came to take away the lady. I was obliged to put it away then, becauſe mama called me to go to bed; but I want ſo to know what will become of them, you cannot think.

Well, dear Marguerite, I am ſorry you muſt wait; but you muſt learn to have patience.

Do you know, papa, I walked in the garden before breakfaſt. And ſo, not thinking of any thing, I came to the ſummer-houſe; and I tried to open the door, but I could not. I found it was locked. So I thought Julia was there, and I knocked, and called Julia, but nobody anſwered. So then I knew Julia was not there, for I was ſure ſhe would have opened the door. So I climbed upon the ſtump of the pear-tree, and tried to look in at the window; but the ſhutters were ſhut, and I could not get to ſee over the top of them. And I walked all round the ſummer-houſe, and all the ſhutters were ſhut. Papa, I wiſh you would not let a man get into the ſummer-houſe, who ſhuts all the ſhutters, and locks the door. You always uſed to let me go into every room I liked; and, do you know, I think none but bad people lock

and

and bolt themſelves up ſo. It puts me in mind of the giants with their draw bridges and their pit-falls; I ſhall be quite afraid of this frightful old man.

This prattle of the child was nothing; yet it encreaſed the embarraſſment of my ſituation, and made the peculiarity of the caſe more conſpicuous. Finding her pertinacious in inſiſting upon a topic that was diſagreeable to me, her mother called her from me, and put her upon ſome occupation that ſerved to divert her attention. I felt like a perſon that was guilty of ſome crime; and this conſideration and kindneſs of my wife, when I ſeemed to myſelf to deſerve her reproach, had not the power to calm my uneaſineſs.

Theſe little occurrences appeared like the beginning of a ſeparation of intereſts, and eſtrangement of hearts. I taſked myſelf ſeverely; I ſummoned the whole force of my mind, that I might ſtrictly conſider what it was in which I was about to engage. If this ſlight and caſual hint of a ſecret is felt both by Marguerite and myſelf with ſo much uneaſineſs and embarraſſment, what will be our ſituation, if I go on to accept the ſtranger's confidence, and become the depoſitary of an arcanum ſo important as he repreſents his to be? He declares himſelf able to beſtow upon me the higheſt opulence; what will be the feelings of my wife and children, when they ſee my condition ſuddenly changed from its preſent humble appearance to ſplendour and wealth, without being able to aſſign the ſource of this extraordinary acceſſion?

It is difficult to conceive a family picture more enviable, than that to which I was now continually preſent, and of which I formed a part. We had been happy on the banks of the Garonne,

ronne, and we had pictured to ourſelves a plan of happineſs immediately on our arrival in the city of Conſtance. But theſe were little and imperfect, compared with what I now enjoyed. In the firſt ſituation my children were infants, and in the ſecond the eldeſt was but ten years of age. The mother was now thirty-five; and ſhe had loſt, in my eys at leaſt, none of her perſonal attractions. Her intellectual accompliſhments were much greater than ever. Her underſtanding was matured, her judgment decided, her experience more comprehenſive. As ſhe had a greater compaſs of materials to work upon, her fancy was more playful, her converſation richer, and her reflections more amuſing and profound. The matronal character ſhe had acquired, had had no other effect on her feelings, than to render them more deep, more true and magnetical. Her diſpoſition was more entirely affectionate, than it had even been, in the firſt year of our cohabitation. Her attachment to her children was exemplary, and her vigilance uninterrupted; and for myſelf, ſhe was accuſtomed, in all that related to our mutual love, to enter into my ſentiments and inclinations with ſo juſt a tone of equality and kindneſs, that we ſeemed to be two bodies animated by a ſingle ſoul. If the mother were improved, the children were ſtill more improved. In their early years we are attached to our offspring, merely becauſe it is ours, and in a way that has led ſuperficial ſpeculators to conſider the attachment, leſs as the neceſſary operation of a ſenſible and conſcious mind, than as a wiſe proviſion of nature for the perpetuation of the ſpecies. But as they grow up, the caſe is different. Our partiality is then confirmed or diminiſhed, by qualities

qualities visible to an impartial by-stander as really as to ourselves. They then cease to be merely the objects of our solicitude, and become our companions, the partners of our sentiments, and the counsellors of our undertakings. Such at least was my case at the present period. Charles, who was now sixteen, was manly beyond his years, while the native fire of his disposition was tempered by adversity, by an humble situation, and by the ardour of filial and fraternal affection. Julia, who was two years younger, became daily more interesting by the mildness of her disposition and the tenderness of her sensibility. Louisa was only twelve; but, as she was extremely notable, and had an uncommonly quick and accurate spirit of imitation, she rendered herself exceedingly useful to her mother. Marguerite, the plaything and amusement of the family, had, as I have said, just completed the eighth year of her age.

One exquisite source of gratification, when it is not a source of uneasiness, to speak from my own experience, which a parent finds in the society of his children, is their individuality. They are not puppets, moved with wires, and to be played on at will. Almost from the hour of their birth, they have a will of their own, to be consulted and negociated with. We may say to them, as Adam to the general mother of mankind, But now, thou wert flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone; and, even now, thou standest before me, vested in the prerogatives of sentiment and reason; a living being, to be regarded with attention and deference, to be courted, not compelled, susceptible of the various catalogue of human passions, capable of resentment and gratitude, of indignation and love, of perverseness and submission. It is because

cauſe thou art thus formed that I love thee. I cannot be intereſted about objects inanimate or brute. I require a ſomewhat that ſhall exerciſe my judgment, and awaken my moral feelings. It is neceſſary to me to approve myſelf, and be approved by another. I rejoice to ſtand before you, at once the defendant and the judge. I rejoice in the reſtraint to which your independent character ſubjects me, and it will be my pride to cultivate that independence in your mind. I would negociate for your affections and confidence, and not be loved by you, but in proportion as I ſhall have done ſomething to deſerve it. I could not congratulate myſelf upon your correſpondence to my wiſhes, if it had not been in your power to withhold it.

While I indulge myſelf in this vein of reflection, I ſeem again to ſee my family, as they ſurrounded me in the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, Marguerite the partner of my life, Charles the brother of my cares, the blooming Julia, the ſage Louiſa, and the playful cadette of the family. How richly furniſhed, how cheerful, how heart reviving appeared to me the apartment in which they were aſſembled! I dwell upon the image with fond affection and lingering delight. Where are they now? How has all this happineſs been maliciouſly undermined, and irrevocably deſtroyed! To look back on it, it ſeems like the idle fabrick of a dream. I awake, and find myſelf alone! Were there really ſuch perſons? Where are they diſperſed? Whither are they gone? Oh, miſerable ſolitude and deſertion, to which I have ſo long been condemned! I ſee nothing around me, but ſpeechleſs walls, or human faces that ſay as little to my heart as the walls themſelves! How palſied is my ſoul! How withered my affections! —but I will not anticipate.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

I Carried food to the ſtranger as occaſion required in the courſe of the day. He ſeemed indiſpoſed to ſpeak, and we exchanged ſcarcely more than two or three words. The next morning was the implied time to which the queſtion of his confidence was deferred, and I went to him with the full reſolution of refuſing it. Whether it were that he diſcerned this reſolution in my countenance, or that, in the interval that elapſed, he had formed a meaner opinion of my character, and thought me unfit for the purpoſes he intended I ſhould anſwer, certain it is that he anticipated me. At the ſame time he magnified the importance of the gifts he had to communicate. He expreſſed himſelf aſtoniſhed at the precipitateneſs of his yeſterday's conduct. It was not till after much trial and long probation that he could chooſe himſelf a confident. I was not at preſent fit for the character nor perhaps ever ſhould be. The talent he poſſeſſed was one upon which the fate of nations and of the human ſpecies might be made to depend. God had given it for the beſt and higheſt purpoſes, and the veſſel in which it was depoſited, muſt be purified from the alloy of human frailty. It might be abuſed, and applied to the moſt atrocious deſigns. It might blind the underſtanding of the wiſeſt, and corrupt the integrity of the nobleſt. It might overturn kingdoms, and change the whole order of human ſociety into anarchy and barbariſm. It might render its poſſeſſor the univerſal plague or the univerſal tyrant of mankind.

Go, St. Leon! added the ſtranger, you are

not qualified for ſo important a truſt. You ar not yet purged of imbecility and weakneſs.—Though you have paſſed through much, and had conſiderable experience, you are yet a child. I had heard your hiſtory, and expected to find you a different man. Go, and learn to know yourſelf for what you are, frivolous and inſignificant, worthy to have been born a peaſant, and not fitted to adorn the rolls of chivalry, or the rank to which you were deſtined!

There was ſomething ſo impreſſive in the rebuke and contempt of this venerable ſage, that made it impoſſible to contend with them. Never was there a man more ſingular, and in whom were united greater apparent contradictions.—Obſerve him in a quiet and unanimated moment, you might almoſt take him for a common beggar, a poor, miſerable wretch, in whom life lingered, and inſenſate ſtupidity reigned. But, when his ſoul was touched in any of thoſe points in which it was moſt alive, he roſe at once, and appeared a giant. His voice was the voice of thunder; and rolling in a rich and ſublime ſwell, it arreſted and ſtilled, while it withered all the nerves of the ſoul. His eye-beam ſat upon your countenance and ſeemed to look through you. You wiſhed to eſcape from its penetrating power, but you had not the ſtrength to move. I began in a manner to feel as if it were ſome myſterious and ſuperior being in human form, and not a mortal with whom I was concerned.

What a ſtrange and contradictory being is man! I had gone to the ſummer-houſe this morning, with a firm reſolution to refuſe the gifts and the communication of the ſtranger. I felt lightened as it were from a burthen, which

the

the whole preceding day had oppreſſed me, while I formed this reſolution. I was cheerful, and felt conſcious of rectitude and ſtrength of mind. How cheaply we prize a gift which we imagine to be already in our power! With what philoſophical indifference do we turn it on every ſide, depreciate its worth, magnify its diſadvantages, and then pique ourſelves upon the ſobriety and juſtice of the eſtimate we have made! Thus it was with me in the preſent tranſaction. But when I had received the check of the ſtranger, and ſaw the propoſed benefit removed to a vaſt and uncertain diſtance, then it reſumed all its charms. Then the contraſt of wealth and poverty flaſhed upon my ſoul. Before, I had queſtioned the reality of the ſtranger's pretenſions, and conſidered whether he might not be an artful impoſtor. But now all was clearneſs and certainty. The advantages of wealth paſſed in full review, before my roufed imagination. I ſaw horſes, palaces, and their furniture; I ſaw the ſplendour of exhibition and the trains of attendants, objects which had been for ever dear to my puerile imagination; I contemplated the honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, which are ſo apt to attend upon wealth, when diſburſed with a moderate degree of dignity and munificence. When I compared this with my preſent poverty and deſertion, the meanneſs of our appearance, our daily labours, the danger that an untoward accident might ſink us in the deepeſt diſtreſs, and the hopeleſſneſs that my ſon or his poſterity, ſhould ever riſe to that honour and diſtinction to which they had once been deſtined, the effect was too powerful.

Another feeling came ſtill further in aid of this. It was the humiliating impreſſion which

the

the ſtranger had left upon my mind. This ſeemed to be his great art, if in reality his conduct is to be imputed to art. There is no enemy to virtue ſo fatal as a ſenſe of degradation. Self-applauſe is our principal ſupport in every liberal and elevated act of virtue. If this ally can be turned againſt us, if we can be made to aſcribe baſeneſs, effeminacy, want of ſpirit and adventure to our virtuous reſolutions, we ſhall then, indeed, feel ourſelves ſhaken. This was preciſely my ſituation. The figure I made in my own eyes was mean; I was impatient of my own degradation; I believed that I had ſhown myſelf uxorious and effeminate, at a time that muſt have rouſed in me the ſpirit of a man, if there had been a ſpark of manly ſpirit latent in my breaſt. This impatience co-operated with the temptations of the ſtranger, and made me anxious to poſſeſs what he offered to my acceptance.

I reaſoned thus with myſelf: What excites my ſcruples is ſimply the idea of having one ſingle ſecret from my wife and family. This ſcruple is created by the ſingular and unprecedented confidence in which we have been accuſtomed to live. Other men have their ſecrets; nor do they find their domeſtic tranquillity broken by that circumſtance. The merchant does not call his wife into conſultation upon his ventures; the ſtateſman does not unfold to her his policy and his projects; the warrior does not take her advice upon the plan of his campaign; the poet does not concert with her his flights and his epiſodes. To other men the domeſtic ſcene is the relaxation of their cares; when they enter it, they diſmiſs the buſineſs of the day, and call another cauſe. I only have concentred in it the whole of my exiſtence. By this means I have

extinguiſhed

extinguiſhed in myſelf the true energy of the human character. A man can never be reſpectable in the eyes of the world or in his own, except ſo far as he ſtands by himſelf, and is truly independent. He may have friends; he may have domeſtic connexions; but he muſt not in theſe connexions loſe his individuality. Nothing truly great was ever atchieved, that was not executed or planned in ſolitary ſecluſion.

But if theſe reaſons are ſufficient to prove that the plan I have lately purſued is fundamentally wrong, how much more will the importance of what is propoſed by the ſtranger, plead my excuſe for deviating from it? How bitterly have I lamented the degradation of my family! Shall I not ſeize upon this opportunity of reſtoring them to their hereditary honours? I deemed the ruin I had brought upon them irreparable; ſhall I not embrace the occaſion of atoning for my fault? No man deſpiſes wealth, who fully underſtands the advantages it confers. Does it not confer the means of cultivating our powers? Does it not open to us the career of honour, which is ſhut againſt the unknown and obſcure? Does it not conciliate the prepoſſeſſions of mankind, and gain for us an indulgent and liberal conſtruction? Does it not inſpire us with graceful confidence, and animate us to generous adventure? The poor man is denied every advantage of education, and wears out his life in labour and ignorance. From offices of truſt, from opportunities of diſtinction, he is ignominiouſly thruſt aſide; and, though he ſhould ſacrifice his life for the public cauſe, he dies unhonoured and unknown. If by any accident he comes into poſſeſſion of thoſe qualities which, when diſcerned and acknowledged, com-

mand

mand the applauſe of mankind who will liſten to him? His appearance is mean; and the faſtidious auditor turns from him ere half his words are uttered. He has no equipage and attendants, no one to blow the trumpet before him and proclaim his rank; how can he propoſe any thing that ſhall be worthy of attention? Aware of the prepoſſeſſion of mankind in this reſpect, he is alarmed and overwhelmed with confuſion before he opens his mouth. Filled with the conſcience of his worth, he anticipates the unmerited contempt that is prepared to oppreſs him, and his very heart dies within him. Add to theſe circumſtances, the conſtitution of our nature, the various pleaſures of which it is adapted to partake, and how many of theſe pleaſures it is in the power of wealth to procure. Yes; an object like this will ſufficiently apologiſe for me to thoſe for whoſe ſake alone it was eſtimable in my ſight. It is indeed nothing but our poverty and the lowneſs of our ſtation that have thus produced in us an entire concurrence and communication of ſentiments. Wealth would to a certain degree deſtroy our contact, and take off the wonder that we had each our thoughts that were not put into the common ſtock.

These conſiderations decided my choice. I was not indeed without ſome variations of mind and ſome compunction of heart for the reſolution I had eſpouſed. The longer the ſtranger remained with me, the more evident it was that there was ſomething myſterious between us; and the unreſerved affection and union that had lately reigned under my roof, ſuffered materially the effects of it. The ſtranger had been led to my cottage in the firſt inſtance, by the entire ſolitude in which it was placed. There

was

was nothing about which he was ſo ſolicitous as concealment; the moſt atrocious criminal could not be more alarmed at the idea of being diſcovered. I was unable to account for this; but I was now too anxious for his ſtay and the promiſed reward, not to be alert in gratifying all his wiſhes. The moſt inviolable ſecrecy therefore was enjoined to the whole family; and the younger branches of it, particularly the little Marguerite, it was neceſſary to keep almoſt immured, to prevent the danger of their reporting any thing out of the houſe, that might be diſpleaſing to the ſtranger, and fatal to my expectations. Upon the whole, my ſituation was eminently an uneaſy one. No experiment can be more precarious than that of a half-confidence; and nothing but the ſincere affection that was entertained for me could have rendered it ſucceſsful in this inſtance. My family felt that they were truſted by me only in points where it was impoſſible to avoid it, and that I was not therefore properly entitled to their co-operation; I was conſcious of ingratitude in making them no return for their fidelity. They kept my ſecret becauſe they were ſolicitous to oblige me, not from any conviction that they were conferring on me a benefit, but, on the contrary, ſuſpecting that the object as to which they were blindly aſſiſting me, would prove injurious to me, as well as to themſelves.

The health of the ſtranger viſibly declined; but this was a circumſtance which he evidently regarded with complacency. It was the only ſource of conſolation of which he appeared ſuſceptible; his mind was torn with painful remembrances, and agitated with terrible forebodings. He abhorred ſolitude, and yet found no conſolation in ſociety. I could not be much

with

with him; my duty to my family who were principally ſupported by my labour, was a call too imperious to be neglected. Even when I was with him, he commonly teſtified no deſire for converſation. Sit with me, he was accuſtomed to ſay; give me as much of your time as you can; but do not talk. Upon theſe occaſions, he would ſit ſometimes with his arms folded, and with the moſt melancholy expreſſion imaginable. He would then knit his brows, wring his hand with a ſadneſs that might have excited pity in the hardeſt breaſt, or with both hands cloſed, the one claſping the other, ſtrike himſelf impatiently on the forehead. At other times, he would riſe from his ſeat, pace the room with hurried and unquiet ſteps, and then again throw himſelf on his couch in the greateſt agitation. His features were often convulſed with agony. Often have I wiped away the ſweat, which would ſuddenly burſt out in large drops on his forehead. At thoſe ſeaſons he would continually mutter words to himſelf, the ſenſe of which it was impoſſible for me to collect. I could perceive however that he often repeated the names of Clara!—Henry!—a wife!—a friend! a friend——and then he would groan as if his heart were burſting. Sometimes, in the midſt of theſe recollections, he would paſs the back of his hand over his eyes; and then, looking at it, ſhaking his head, and biting his under lip, exclaim with a piteous accent, Dry!—dry! all the moiſture of my frame is periſhed! Then, as if recovering himſelf, he would cry with a ſtartled and terrified voice, Who is there? St. Leon? Come to me! Let me feel that there is a human being near me! I often call for you; but I find myſelf alone, deſerted, friendleſs—friendleſs!

At

At times when his recollection was more complete, he would ſay, I know, I tire you! Why ſhould I tire you? What gratification can it be to me to occaſion emotions of diſguſt? Upon theſe occaſions I endeavoured to ſoothe him, and aſſured him I found pleaſure in adminiſtering to his relief. But he replied, No, no: do not flatter me! It is long ſince I have heard the voice of flattery! I never loved it! No, I know I am precluded from ever exciting friendſhip or ſympathy! Why am I not dead? Why do I live, a burthen to myſelf, uſeful to none? My ſecret, I could almoſt reſolve, ſhould die with me; but you have earned, and you ſhall receive it!

The ſtranger was not always in this ſtate of extreme anguiſh, nor always indiſpoſed to converſe. He had lucid intervals; and could beguile the ſorrow of his heart with ſocial communication. We ſometimes talked of various ſciences and parts of learning; he appeared to be well informed in them all. His obſervations were ingenious; his language copious; his illuſtrations fanciful and picturеſque; his manner bold and penetrating. It was eaſy to obſerve in him the marks of a vigorous and maſculine genius. Sometimes we diſcuſſed the events at that time going on in the world. When we ſpoke of events that had paſſed, and perſons that had died, more than a century before, the ſtranger often ſpoke of them in a manner as if he had been an eye-witneſs and directly acquainted with the objects of our diſcourſe. This I aſcribed to the vividneſs of his conceptions, and the animation of his language. He however often checked himſelf in this peculiarity, and always carefully avoided what could lead to any thing perſonal to himſelf. I deſcribed to

him

him the ſcenes of my youth, and related my ſubſequent hiſtory; he on his part was invincibly ſilent on every circumſtance of his country, his family and his adventures.

The longer I was acquainted with him, the more my curioſity grew. I was reſtleſs and impatient to learn ſomething reſpecting a man who thus wrapped myſelf up in myſtery and reſerve. Often I threw out, as it were, a line by which to fathom his ſecret. I talked of various countries. I mentioned different kinds of calamities and even of crimes that by ſome incidental alluſion I might diſcover at unawares his country, his connections, or the nature of his ſtory. When any thing offered that ſeemed to promiſe to lead to the deſired point, I doubled my queſtions, and endeavoured to conſtruct them with the ſkill of a crafty litigant in a court of juſtice. There were ſome ſubjects, the very mention of which gave him uneaſineſs, and upon which he immediately ſilenced me; but theſe were not of themſelves enough to afford me a clue, or to furniſh materials out of which for me to conſtruct the hiſtory of the ſtranger. He did not always perceive the drift of my queſtions and ſnares; but, when he did, he generally became loud, reſentful and furious. There was nothing elſe that ſo completely rouſed his indignation.

St. Leon! ſaid he to me one day, ſilence this inquiſitive temper of yours, check your raſh and rude curioſity! The only ſecret I have that can be of any importance to you, you ſhall one day know. But my country, my family, my adventures, I have once told you, and I now tell you again, you ſhall never know. That knowledge can be of moment to no one, and it ſhall never be diſcloſed. When this heart ceaſes to beat, that tale ſhall ceaſe to have a place on the

face

face of the earth. Why ſhould my diſtreſſes and diſgraces be publiſhed to any one? Is it not enough, that they have lacerated my boſom, that they have deprived me of my friends, that they have viſited me with every adverſity and every anguiſh, that they have bowed me down to the earth, that they have made thought and remembrance and life itſelf a burthen too heavy to be borne? Your preſent injudicious conduct, if perſiſted in, will have the effect of driving me from your roof, of turning me once more upon that world, upon that world that I hate, upon the world whoſe bruiſes and ill treatment I feel in every fibre of my frame, of expoſing me again to freſh perſecutions, and cauſing me to periſh miſerably in a dungeon, or die upon a ſcaffold. Spare me, my generous hoſt; I know you are capable of generoſity. Indeed I have endured enough to ſatiate the rage of malice itſelf. You ſee what I ſuffer from the rage and tempeſt of my own thoughts, even without the aſſiſtance of any external foe. Let me die in that degree of tranquillity I am able to attain! I will not trouble you long!

At another time, he addreſſed me in a different ſtyle. You ſee, St. Leon, that the anguiſh of mind I endure is ſuch as is ordinarily attributed to the recollection of great crimes; and you have very probably conjectured that in my caſe it ariſes from the ſame ſource. If you have, I forgive you; but I aſſure you that you are miſtaken. Take from yourſelf that uneaſineſs, if it has ever viſited you; you are not giving ſanctuary to a villain! I am innocent, I can take no crime to my charge. I have ſuffered more almoſt than man ever ſuffered; but I have ſinned little. The cauſe of my uneaſineſs and prime ſource of all my misfortunes, I dare

not diſcloſe to you. Be contented with the plan of my conduct. I have digeſted my purpoſe, I have determined where to ſpeak and where to be ſilent.

The more I ſaw of this man, the more ſtrange and unaccountable appeared to me every thing that related to him. Why was he ſo poor, poſſeſſing, as he pretended, inexhauſtible wealth? Why was he unhappy, with ſo great talents and genius, and ſuch various information? Why was he friendleſs, being, as he ſolemnly aſſured me, ſo perfectly innocent, and of conſequence ſo reſpectable? That he was an impoſtor, every thing that I ſaw of him forbade me to believe. His ſorrows were too profound and excruciating, for it to be poſſible for me to rank them among the actions that a man may play. The greatneſs of his powers, the dignity of his carriage, the irreſiſtible appearance of ſincerity that ſparkled in his eye, and modulated his voice, fully convinced me that he really was what he pretended to be. I had heard of men who, under the pretence of alchymy, faſtened themſelves upon perſons poſſeſſing ſums of money, and, beguiling them with a deluſive expectation of wealth, reduced them to beggary and ruin. One ſuch perſon I had had a brief connection with during my reſidence in the Bordelois, though, finding the incident by no means eſſential to the progreſs of my hiſtory, I have paſſed it over, together with many others, in ſilence. But nothing could be more unlike than that man and the perſon reſpecting whom I was now concerned. In reality I poſſeſſed at that time, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, a more than common inſight into the characters of mankind, ſo as to be little likely, except under the tyranny of paſſion, as in the inſtance of gaming, to be made the prey of impoſition.

poſition. I had ſtudied my ſpecies as it exhibits itſelf in hiſtory, and had mixed with it in various ſcenes and under diſſimilar aſpects. I had accordingly, in the tranſaction I have juſt alluded to, ſoon detected the plans of the villain who expected to delude me. But what could be the purpoſe of the ſtranger in this reſpect? The pretended alchymiſt in France had obtained a certain ſum of money of me, and demanded more. The ſtranger never made ſuch a demand of me; and perfectly knew that, even if I had been inclined, I was not able to ſupply him. The alchymiſt had amuſed me with deſcriptions of various proceſſes for the tranſmutation of metals, had exhibited his crucibles and retorts, and employed a ſort of dramatic *coup d'œil*, for the purpoſe of awakening my curioſity, and ſtimulating my paſſions. The ſtranger had ſimply ſtated, in the plaineſt and moſt direct manner, that it was in his power to enrich me; but had been ſilent as to the manner of producing the wealth he promiſed, and had abſtained from every effort to intoxicate my mind. I felt therefore in this inſtance the effect, that, without being able to ſolve the difficulties and contrarieties that hung about him, I yet believed his aſſertions, nor was the inſcrutability of his hiſtory and his motives capable of ſhaking my confidence.

One day, during the period of his concealment, certain officers of the biſhop of Conſtance, accompanied by a foreigner in a Neapolitan habit, came to my houſe, and, as it proved, with the expreſs purpoſe of ſearching for the man who had put himſelf under my protection. Charles and myſelf were at work in the fields within ſight of the lake. Their appearance firſt caught the attention of Charles as they ap-

proached the ſhore, and he enquired of me reſpecting the appearance of the foreigner which was different from any he had been accuſtomed to ſee. While we were yet ſpeaking I obſerved in them an intention to land within ſight of my cottage. This was an uncommon circumſtance; our privacy was rarely invaded, and we lived almoſt as much out of the world as we ſhould have done in the remoteſt iſland of the Atlantic ocean. I reaſoned in my own mind upon their appearance; they had little reſemblance to a party of pleaſure; the habit of the officers of juſtice I was perfectly acquainted with; and the ſuſpicion of the real nature of their errand immediately darted on my thoughts. Without ſaying a word to Charles on the ſubject, I haſtened with all the ſpeed I could exert to the apartment of the ſtranger, and acquainted him with what I had ſeen. He concurred with me in the ideas I had formed, and appeared much ſhocked at the intelligence. There was however no time to be loſt; and, after having for a moment given vent to an anguiſh which was too powerful to be ſuppreſſed, he withdrew as haſtily as he could from the ſummer-houſe, and betook himſelf to the woods. He recommended to me to leave him, telling me that he could conceal himſelf moſt effectually alone, and obſerving that it would be neceſſary for me to meet the officers, and endeavour as much as poſſible to remove their ſuſpicions.

Accordingly, as ſoon as he was gone, I threw open the windows of the ſummer-houſe, removed the ſhutters, and took from it, as effectually as I could, all appearance of having ſerved as a place of concealment. This was a precaution which the ſtranger had in a former inſtance recommended to me. It fortunately

happened

happened that Julia and the little Marguerite were gone out together in the fields on the eaſtern ſide of my cottage; otherwiſe infallibly the child by her innocent prattle, and perhaps Julia by the apprehenſive ſenſibility of her temper, would have betrayed our ſecret, or at leaſt have ſuggeſted to the officers a feeling as if, by a longer ſtay and a more diligent ſearch, they might poſſibly ſucceed in the object of their expedition. As it was, I received them at the door, and learned from their own mouths, the nature of their errand. Of Charles, whom they had croſſed in the fields, they had ſimply aſked whether they were right as to the name of the perſon who was proprietor of the cottage before them. They deſcribed to me with great accuracy the appearance of the ſtranger, and inſiſted that he had been an inhabitant of my cottage. They told me, they were well informed that the ſummer-houſe in my garden had carefully been ſhut up for more than a month paſt, and that ſome perſon had been concealed there. I was intereſted in the diſtreſs of the ſtranger; I was impreſſed with the dignity of his character: I implicitly confided in his aſſertions of innocence and the unjuſt perſecution that he ſuffered; I was not inſenſible to the propoſed reward, the realiſing of which probably depended on his ſafety. But, moſt of all, I conſidered my honour as pledged for the protection of the man who had thus caſt himſelf upon my fidelity, and believed that I ſhould be everlaſtingly diſgraced if he ſuffered any evil through treachery or neglect on my part. I therefore anſwered confidently to the officers that they were miſinformed, and offered to conduct them over every part of my houſe and demeſnes, that they might ſatisfy themſelves by

perſonal inſpection that there was no perſon concealed any where within my poſſeſſions. I ſhould have been better pleaſed, openly to have defied their interrogatories, and to have aſked them, whether, allowing their ſuſpicions to be juſt, they were entitled to believe that I was ſuch a villain, as to betray a man who had thrown himſelf upon my generoſity? But, though this conduct would have had a greater appearance of gallantry, I believed it would have leſs of the reality, as it would have ſtrengthened their idea of my participation, and encreaſed the danger of the perſon I was bound to protect.

They accepted my offer of ſubmitting to their ſearch, and made a ſtrict examination of every place about my habitation, in which the ſtranger could be concealed. Diſappointed here, they endeavoured by threats to diſcover whether I was able to give them any information. To theſe I calmly anſwered, that they had miſtaken my character, that, though I was a poor man, I had not forgotten that I was noble, that they were already in poſſeſſion of my ſpontaneous anſwer to their enquiries, and that, in no caſe, and upon no ſuppoſition, ſhould tyranny and ill treatment extort from me, what I was not in the firſt inſtance freely diſpoſed to give. My wife was preſent during this converſation, and, I could perceive, felt an alarm for my danger, that ſhe would have been incapable of feeling for a danger to herſelf.

Though I was extremely anxious that theſe men ſhould be diſappointed in the object of their expedition, yet I did not neglect this opportunity of endeavouring to obtain ſatisfaction for my own curioſity. I remarked at firſt that the Neapolitan was an inquiſitor, and this circumſtance had given additional poignancy to

the

the uneaſineſs of Marguerite. But the accuſations of which the inquiſition at this time took cogniſance were ſo numerous, the eccleſiaſtical power continually uſurping upon the civil, that I was little aſſiſted in the judgment I was deſirous to frame, by any inference to be deduced from this circumſtance. I queſtioned directly, with an air as if it were merely in the way of converſation, what was the crime of the man of whom they were in purſuit, and what was the courſe forcible enough to induce a Neapolitan inquiſitor to follow ſo decrepid and forlorn an individual as he deſcribed, beyond the Alps, and almoſt to the banks of the Danube? To this he anſwered roughly, that, though he was not able to diſcover the object of his ſearch, he was by no means convinced that I was not his abettor and accomplice; and that, as to his crime, that was not to be named; the welfare of Chriſtendom demanding, that the criminal, and the memory of his offences, ſhould be buried together. At the ſame time he warned me to conſider well what I did, before I expoſed myſelf to be overwhelmed by the vengeance of the court of which he was a member. To this I anſwered haughtily, that I had already condeſcended to repel his ſuſpicion, and that no other man than an inquiſitor would have had the ſtupidity or the audaciouſneſs to queſtion my veracity. I added that I was perfectly acquainted with the nature of his court, which was an object of abhorrence to the whole Chriſtian world; but that he was much miſtaken, if he ſuppoſed that the deteſtable nature of its proceedings would enable him to practiſe every ſort of outrage with impunity. The officers withdrew into the little incloſure in front of my cottage, and I overheard them conſulting whether, having

ing failed in their principal object, they ſhould carry me a priſoner along with them. The firmneſs of my manner however had awed them, and the fearleſſneſs I expreſſed ſeemed to them to ariſe from a conſciouſneſs of innocence. They at length departed as they came.

I watched them from my cottage as they deſcended to the ſhore, and it was with no little pleaſure that I at length perceived them reimbark, and ſtand off for the oppoſite ſide of the lake. This ſpectacle for a time entirely engaged me, and when I turned round from the door, I obſerved that my beloved Marguerite had been in tears. She endeavoured to hide this circumſtance from my ſight. I took her affectionately by the hand, and, preſſing her to my boſom, entreated her not to make herſelf uneaſy.

Ah, Reginald! ſaid ſhe, how can I avoid being uneaſy, when I ſee you expoſed to this imminent danger? I thought that, in forfeiting our fortune and our rank, and retiring to this obſcure and ſequeſtered ſituation, we might at leaſt promiſe ourſelves the bleſſing of the poor, oblivion and ſecurity: and that ſhould have conſoled me for all I have loſt. Who is this man, that is thus myſteriouſly hidden among us? What is the guilt from the puniſhment of which he thus anxiouſly withdraws himſelf? What can be the nature of your connection with ſuch a man? And what will be the iſſue of ſo perilous an adventure?

I heſitated. I knew not what to anſwer to ſo earneſt an anxiety. I was melted at the diſtreſs and the affection of Marguerite. She ſaw my embarraſſment, and proceeded:

Miſtake me not, my beloved! ſaid ſhe. I have no deſire to pry into what you are willing to conceal. Forgive the peturbation which

has

has poured itſelf out in theſe involuntary queſtions. I repoſe an entire confidence in you. I would ſooner die, than interfere with any object you have at heart. Go on according to the dictates of your own judgment, undiſturbed by me. I will not doubt that you have ſufficient reaſons for what you communicate, and what you ſuppreſs. I am grieved indeed, at the interruption of our obſcure and unambitious tranquillity; but I had reſolved not to trouble you with my uneaſineſs and apprehenſions. The incident of this morning has extorted them from me; but I will behave better in future.

This ſcene was extremely diſtreſſing to me. My wife was oppreſſed with fears, and I had nothing to anſwer her. The conſolations that roſe up in my own mind, I was prevented from communicating. The more generouſly ſhe confided in me, the more I felt the ungracious and diſagreeable nature of the concealment I practiſed. I endeavoured however to encourage myſelf with the idea, that the labour would not be long, and the harveſt would prove abundant. I ſaid in my own mind, the worſt is now over; the buſineſs has been commenced; the ſhock to my own family has actually occurred; I muſt go on reſolutely, and ſhut my eyes to the temporarily diſpleaſing circumſtances that may be connected with the completing my object.

CHAP. XIII

ANOTHER ſource of uneaſineſs added itſelf to the diſtraction my mind already endured. The ſtranger did not appear. It was in the morning that the officers of juſtice arrived; they departed about noon; and in two hours afterwards I entered the wood in ſearch of my gueſt. The wood was of ſome leagues in extent; it was interſected by paths in various directions; it was interſperſed with caverns; its growth was of all kinds, in ſome places lofty trees that ſeemed to form a ſupport for the clouds, in others an underwood impenetrable alike to the feet and to the eye. As I entered the wood, I however conceived that the diſcovery of the ſtranger, to me who was acquainted with its lurking places, would be an affair of little toil; his feebleneſs and decrepitude would not ſuffer him to proceed to any great diſtance. In this however I was miſtaken. I looked carefully on all ſides; I examined every receſs and corner with which I was acquainted; but I found no trace of the ſtranger. The ſcene was ſo complicated and involved that even this was a labour of conſiderable duration. At length I became ſatisfied that he was not in the nearer diviſion of the wood.

I paused. I felt at once that it was little leſs than a Herculean taſk to hunt through the whole of its dimenſions. It would probably be of little uſe to call, and endeavour by that means

to

to diſcover his retreat. I knew of no name by which he was to be recognized, and, if my own voice was but a ſlight reſource to penetrate this immenſe labyrinth of foliage, the voice of the ſtranger, weakened by age, and now probably ſtill more enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, could not be expected to make itſelf heard. Beſide which, as I knew not what the ſource of information had been to the officers who had juſt left me, I was unwilling to expoſe my gueſt to the danger that might ariſe from this mode of ſeeking him. I could not even be ſure, though I had ſeen their boat ſtand off from the ſhore, that they might not afterwards land one or more of their party, and be at this very moment within ear-ſhot of me. I therefore proceeded in anxiety and ſilence.

My ſearch was no more ſucceſsful in the part of the wood with which I was little acquainted, than in the part with which I was moſt familiar. I had already been engaged four hours in the taſk, and night began to come on. It ſhut in with heavy clouds, that on all ſides appeared deeply loaded with rain. I now began to conſider my own ſituation; and, by comparing circumſtances, found that I was at a great diſtance from my own habitation. There was no direct path by which for me to return. I had proceeded to the right and the left, backward and forward, ſometimes by more open paths, and ſometimes forcing my way through briars and bruſh-wood, as caprice or the hope of effecting the object of my ſearch happened to guide me. It was therefore no eaſy matter to gueſs how I was to return, or even, now that the lowering clouds had covered the horizon with one uniform tint, in which direction lay the

cottage

cottage or the lake. While I ſtood contemplating what was to be done, I heard the howling of the wolves at a diſtance, and their howl had that particular melancholy and diſcomfiting ſound which is well known to precede a coming ſtorm. There was no time to be loſt, and accordingly I ſet out. I was leſs anxious to be at home on my own account, than for the ſake of quieting the alarms of my family, to whom I had already occaſioned too great a portion of uneaſineſs.

I had not proceeded far, before the rain deſcended in torrents, intermingled with peals of thunder and ſheets of lightning. The thunder, interrupted, as it were, from time to time, with the noiſe of the wild beaſts that inhabited the wood, deafened me, while the exceſſive and inſtantaneous brilliancy of the lightning occaſioned me an intolerable aching in the organ of ſight. It rained inceſſantly for two hours, and I found myſelf drenched and fatigued with the wet. During this time my progreſs was ſmall; and I was ever and anon intercepted by the underwood, and could not without repeated experiments diſcover the means of proceeding. At length the rain ſubſided, and ſeemed to give place to a gloomy and motionleſs calm. Soon after, I diſcovered a light at a diſtance, and advanced towards it. As I approached, I perceived that it proceeded from a ſet of banditti, to the amount of fourteen or fifteen perſons, ſitting round a fire in the mouth of a cavern. I was glad to turn my ſteps another way, and was for ſome time afraid that the noiſe I made in occaſionally forcing my way through the buſhes, would alarm them, and coſt me my life. I however fortunately eſcaped their notice.

tice. This was in a part of the wood remote from the path I ought to have taken, and near the road to Lindau.

The day began to dawn before I reached my own habitation. The conjecture I had made, when I was unawares upon the point of falling into the hands of the banditti, that the road of Lindau was on the other side of their retreat, was of some service to me as an indication where to find the cottage and the lake. This road skirted the wood, on the side nearly opposite to that by which I entered it. The difficulties however I had to encounter were inconceivably great, in endeavouring to preserve my line of direction. After having been compelled four or five times to deviate from the line, it is seldom that a traveller will find himself right in his conjecture as to the direction he is pursuing, unless he has some sensible object as a sort of pole-star by which to govern his route. It happened however in this instance that I was more fortunate than I was entitled to expect. I laboured indeed till day break without getting out of the labyrinth that enclosed me. But the sun no sooner began to lend an imperfect light, than I recognised certain objects which upon some former occasions I had observed, and perceived that my journey was nearly at an end. I entered my cottage, and found Marguerite alone awake, and expecting me.

She had been somewhat uneasy on account of my absence, both from the extreme tempestuousness of the night, and in consequence of the painful sensations the events of the preceding morning had introduced, events with which it was almost unavoidable for her to imagine that my absence was in some way connected. The

period of my infanity in Switzerland might indeed have accuſtomed her to the irregularity of my motions, but a term of more than ſix years which had intervened, had produced in her expectations and habits of a different ſort. I related to this admirable woman the adventures of the night and the fruitleſſneſs of the ſearch in which I had been engaged; and this openneſs of communication, unreſembling the nature of the intercourſe which had lately exiſted between us, relieved in ſome degree my burthened heart, and cheered the drooping ſpirits of Marguerite. She dropped ſome ſweet and ſadly pleaſing tears, and her manner ſeemed to ſay, though ſhe would not ſuffer her tongue to give the idea words, How ſweet are cordiality and confidence! Oh, do not let our ſituation, which has deprived us of many other comforts, ever again be robbed of this comfort, which is alone worth all the reſt! Though ſhe neceſſarily felt the preſence of the ſtranger as an evil, the bane of our domeſtic peace, yet it was impoſſible for her not to compaſſionate his fate, and ſuffer ſome diſtreſs from his ſtrange and abrupt diſappearance.

After the converſation which had ſo eminently ſerved as a relief to our minds, Marguerite left me to repoſe myſelf from the extraordinary fatigue I had undergone. But my mind was too much diſturbed to ſuffer me to ſink into the arms of forgetfulneſs. I felt ſomething tragical in the ſad deſtiny of my unfortunate gueſt. It was but too probable that, in his peculiarly weak ſtate of body, and with his declining health, the being thus expoſed for a day and a night to the effects of hunger, of the inclemency of the air, and the tempeſtuouſneſs of the elements, would put a cloſe to his exiſtence. I

was

was determined ſoon to recommence my ſearch. But how could I be ſure that I ſhould be more fortunate to-day, than the day before? If I found him, it was moſt likely I ſhould find him either dead or dying. The degree of intercourſe that had taken place between us, had made him occupy a conſiderable ſpace in my thoughts. The proſpects he had opened to me, the conduct he had induced me to adopt, the painful effects and diſſatisfaction of mind which had been produced by that conduct as it reſpected my family, all combined to give me an intereſt in his fate. I had ſeen his talents; I had felt his aſcendancy; I had experienced that ſort of conflict, which appearances of guilt on the one hand, and aſſeverations of innocence on the other, are calculated to produce in the thoughts and emotions of a by-ſtander. He was no common man; the expectations and conjectures he excited were of no ordinary ſort; and I felt that an army might be deſtroyed, and a ſpacious plain covered with the wounded and the dying, without producing greater commotion in my ſoul.

In the anxious and diſturbed ſtate of mind in which I was, the thoughts flow with extraordinary rapidity. It will be found attended with a ſtrange, and, previouſly to the experiment, incredible mixture of reaſoning and paſſion, of philoſophiſing and fury. I was accordingly conſcious at this moment of the truth of the ſtranger's aſſertion, that in me he had a protector, not a friend. Friendſhip is an object of a peculiar ſort; the ſmalleſt reſerve is deadly to it. I may indeed feel the emotions of a friend towards a man who in part conceals from me the thoughts of his heart; but then I muſt be unconſcious of this

this concealment. The inſtant I feel this limitation of confidence, he drops into the claſs of ordinary men. A divorce is effected between us. Our hearts which grew together, ſuffer amputation; the arteries are cloſed; the blood is no longer mutually transfuſed and confounded. I ſhall be conſcious of all his qualities, for I ſtand in the place of an impartial umpire. I conſider him as a machine capable of ſo much utility to myſelf, and ſo much utility to other men. But I do not regard him as the brother of my ſoul. I do not feel that my life is bound up in his. I do not feel as if, were he to die, the whole world would be at an end to me, and that my happineſs would be buried with him for ever in the darkneſs of the grave. I am not conſcious of thoſe emotions which are the moſt exquiſite and indeſcribable the human mind can experience, and which, being communicated by a ſort of electrical ſtroke to him who is their object, conſtitute the ſolace of all his cares, the alleviator of all his calamities, the only nectar and trueſt balm of human life. For me, he ſtands alone in the world, having companions and aſſociates, the connections, as it were, of mercantile ſelfiſhneſs, or caſual jollity and good humour, but no friend. It was thus that I thought of the ſtranger. He obtained from me the compaſſion due to a human being, and the reſpect extorted by his qualities, but nothing calculated radically to diſturb the equilibrium of my mind. I looked forward to his death with unruffled thoughts and an unmoiſtened eye. There was one thing indeed that ſhook me more deeply; the thought of loſing the promiſed reward, and having expoſed myſelf to the evil of an unquiet and diſſatisfied mind in vain.

I reſted

I reſted but a few hours before I ſet out again upon the ſearch, to which the interpoſition of the darkneſs of the preceding night had put an abrupt cloſe. I had the precaution to take with me a ſlight proviſion of food and cordials, believing that, if I found the ſtranger, he would at leaſt be in the greateſt need of ſomething reviving and reſtorative. Charles earneſtly entreated to aſſiſt me in the ſearch, but upon this I put a peremptory prohibition. It would have been in direct contradiction to what the ſtranger had moſt ſolemnly required of me.

I had already ſpent ſeveral hours in anxiouſly tracing the wood in every direction, and the period of noon was paſt, when, approaching an obſcure and almoſt impenetrable thicket, my ear was caught by a low and melancholy ſound, which at firſt I knew not to what I was to aſcribe. It however arreſted my attention, and cauſed me to aſſume an attitude of liſtening. After the lapſe of little more than a minute, the ſame ſound was repeated. I now diſtinctly perceived that it was the groan of ſome creature in a very feeble and exhauſted ſtate, and immediately ſuſpected that it was the ſtranger. I went almoſt round the thicket before I could diſcern an entrance, and, though I looked with the utmoſt attention, could perceive nothing that the thicket incloſed. The groan was repeated a third time. The long intervals between the groans gave a peculiar melancholy to the effect, and each ſeemed ſo much lower than the groan before, that nothing but the ear of anxious attention would have caught it, at the ſame time that the tone conveyed an idea of ſtupified, yet vital, anguiſh. At length I perceived the legs and ſomething of the garb of a man.

a man. It was the ſtranger! He appeared to have crept into the thicket upon his hands and knees. When I forced my way to him, he ſeemed in the very act of expiring. He was lying on his face, and I raiſed him a little. His eyes were fixed; his mouth was open; his lips and tongue were parched and dry. I infuſed a few drops of a cordial into his mouth. For a moment it appeared to produce no ſenſation, but preſently my patient uttered a deep and long-drawn ſigh. I repeated my application. As a principal cauſe of the condition in which I found him was inanition, the ſtimulant I adminiſtered produced a powerful effect. He moved his hands, ſhuddered, turned his eyes languidly upon me, and, having appeared to recogniſed me, ſhut them haſtily again. I moved him ſlowly and ſofily into a freer air, and bathed his temples with one of the liquids I had about me. By this time he looked up, and then ſuddenly round him with a wild and hurried air. He ſpoke not however; he was ſpeechleſs. In about a quarter of an hour he relapſed into convulſions, in which it ſeemed probable he would expire. They laſted a conſiderable time, and he then ſunk into a ſtate of inſenſibility. I thought he was dead. Thus circumſtanced, it was ſome relief to my humanity to have found him yet alive, and to have received his parting breath. But in a moment his ſecret and his promiſes recurred to me with inexpreſſible anguiſh, and I inwardly reproached him for having deferred his communication ſo long as now to preclude its ever being made. I cannot deſcribe the keenneſs, the burning and intolerable bitterneſs of my ſenſation. Keen it may well be ſuppoſed to be, from its having

ſo

ſo inſtantaneouſly and forcibly recurred, at a time when other objects ſeemed to preſs upon my ſenſes. No one who has not felt what it is to fall in a moment from hope, or, as I ſhould rather ſay, from aſſured poſſeſſion of what his ſoul moſt loved and deſired, into black and interminable deſpair, can imagine what was then the ſtate of my mind. The body of my patient ſlided from my nerveleſs arms; I lifted up the eyes of rage and frenzy as if to curſe the author of my being; and then fell helpleſs and immoveable by the ſide of the ſtranger.

I felt him move. I heard him ſigh; I lifted up my head, and perceived ſtronger marks of life and ſenſe about him, than had yet diſplayed themſelves. I threw my arms about him; I preſſed him to my heart. The emphatical geſture I uſed, ſeemed to have a ſort of magnetical force to rouſe his dying powers. With a little aſſiſtance from me he ſat upright. My aſſiduity produced wonders. It fortunately happened that this thicket was but half a mile from my habitation, and indeed was one of the ſpots which I had ſearched without ſucceſs the day before. About the hour of ſun-ſet, partly by leading, and partly by ſupporting him, I reſtored my gueſt to his former apartment.

He remained ſpeechleſs, or nearly ſo. He vented his ſenſations in ſighs, in inward and inarticulate ſounds, and, even when he arrived at the power of making himſelf underſtood by words, it was only by monoſyllables and half-ſentences that he conveyed to me his meaning. I now gave up my time almoſt entirely to an aſſiduous attendance on the ſtranger. Every day I expected to be his laſt; every day was more or leſs interſperſed with ſymptons that

ſeemed

ſeemed to menace his inſtant diſſolution. During all this time I remained in the anxious ſuſpence of contending hope and fear. Was it probable that he would ever recover ſtrength enough to confer on me the legacy he had announced? The particulars of his ſecret I knew not; but, judging from what I had heard of the pretences and purſuits of alchymy, it was natural to ſuppoſe that he had a proceſs to communicate, which would require on his part conſiderable accuracy of recollection, as well as the power of delivering himſelf in a methodical and orderly diſcourſe.

I was fortunate enough however to perceive, after a tormenting and tedious criſis, that he appeared to be in a progreſs of convaleſcence, and that his ſtrength both of body and mind were recruited daily. After the lapſe of a fortnight from the adventure of the wood, he one evening addreſſed me in the following manner:

"St. Leon, I have been to blame. I have put you to a ſufficient trial; I have received from you every aſſiſtance and kindneſs that my ſituation demanded; I have impoſed on you much trouble and anxiety; I have excited your expectations by announcing to you in part what it was in my power to beſtow; and I have finally riſqued the defrauding your hopes and your humanity of their juſt reward. Do me the juſtice however to remember that I had no preſentiment of that event which has ſo inauſpiciouſly come between you and your hopes. Fool that I was, I imagined I had ſuffered enough, and that, as I had obtained a longer reſpite from external perſecution than I almoſt ever experienced, I ſhould be permitted to ſpend the ſhort remainder of my days uninterrupted! I now however

however look back upon this laſt aſſault with complacency. It has cut off ſomething from the laſt remnant of a life, to the cloſe of which I look forward with inexpreſſible longing; at the ſame time that I am ſtill in proſpect of obtaining the final wiſh of my heart, the ſtealing out of the world unperceived, and thus in ſome meaſure eluding the laſt malice of my enemies. After my death I have but one injunction to leave with you, the injunction of Hercules to Philoctetes, that no inducement may move you to betray to mortal man the place in which you ſhall have depoſited my aſhes. Bury them in a ſpot which I will deſcribe to you; it is not far, and is only recommended to me by its almoſt inacceſſible ſituation: and that once done, ſpeak of me, and, if poſſible, think of me no more. Never on any account mention me or allude to me? never deſcribe me, or relate the manner of our meeting, or the adventure which has at length brought on the deſired cloſe of my exiſtence.

Believe me, in the feeble and helpleſs condition in which I have ſpent the laſt fortnight, your wiſhes and expectations have been uppermoſt in my mind, and there is nothing I have felt with ſo much compunction as the danger of leaving them unſatisfied. To you perhaps I at preſent appear to be rapidly recovering. I feel the dart of death in my vitals; I know I ſhall not live four days. It is neceſſary therefore that I ſhould finiſh without delay all that remains for me to finiſh. I will devote this night to the arranging my thoughts and putting in order what I have to communicate, that no miſtake or omiſſion may have part in a tranſaction ſo important. Come to me to-

morrow

morrow morning; I will be prepared for you.

As ſoon as I had heard this diſcourſe, and provided the ſtranger with every thing he could want during the night, I withdrew. My heart was big with expectation; my thoughts all night were wild and tumultuous. When the hour of aſſignation arrived, I haſtened along the garden to the ſummer-houſe, conſcious that upon that hour depended all the colour of my future life. Since the ſtranger had been in his preſent dangerous condition, the door was not bolted. It was only locked: the key was in my poſſeſſion, and remained night and day attached to my perſon. I opened the door; I panted and was breathleſs.

I immediately ſaw that the ſtranger had undergone ſome great alteration for the worſe. He had ſuffered a ſort of paralytic affection. He lifted up his face as I entered; it was paler than I had ever ſeen it. He ſhook his head mournfully, and intimated by ſigns the diſappointment which this morning muſt witneſs. He was ſpeechleſs. Fate, fate! exclaimed I in an agony of deſpair, am I to be for ever baffled! Is the prize ſo much longed for and ſo ardently expected at laſt to eſcape me!——It is not to be imagined how much theſe ſucceſſive, endleſs diſappointments increaſed my impatience, and magnified in my eyes the donation I ſought.

The whole of this and the following day the ſtranger remained ſpeechleſs. The third day in the morning, he murmured many ſounds, but in a manner ſo exceſſively inarticulate, that I was not able to underſtand one word in ſix that he ſaid. I recollected his pre-

diction

diction that he ſhould die on the fourth day. The fever of my ſoul was at its height. Mortal ſinews and fibres could ſuſtain no more. If the ſtranger had died thus, it is moſt probable that I ſhould have thrown myſelf in anguiſh and rage upon his corpſe, and have expired in the ſame hour.

In the evening of the third day I viſited him again. He had thrown his robe around him, and was ſitting on the ſide of his couch. The evening ſun ſhot his laſt beams over the window-ſhutters. There were about eight inches between the ſhutter and the top of the window; and ſome branches of vines, with their grapes already ripe, broke the uniformity of their light. The ſide of the couch faced the weſt, and the beams played upon the old man's countenance. I had never ſeen it ſo ſerene. The light already ſoftened by the decline of day, gave it a peculiar animation; and a ſmile that ſeemed to betoken renovation and the youth of angels, ſat upon it. He beckoned me to approach. I ſat beſide him on the couch; he took my hand in his, and leaned his face towards me.

I ſhall never witneſs the light of the ſetting ſun again! were the firſt words he uttered. I immediately perceived that he ſpoke more collectedly and with better articulation, than at any time ſince the paralytic ſtroke. Still, however it was no eaſy matter to develop his words. But I wound up every faculty of my frame to catch them; and, aſſiſted as I was by the habit of liſtening to his ſpeech for many weeks, which during the whole of that time had never been diſtinct, I was ſucceſsful enough to make out his entire diſcourſe.

It

It continued, though with various interruptions, for more than half an hour. He explained with wonderful accuracy the whole of his ſecrets, and the proceſs with which they were connected. My ſoul was roufed to the utmoſt ſtretch of attention and aſtoniſhment. His ſecrets, as I have already announced in the commencement of this hiſtory, conſiſted of two principal particulars, the art of multiplying gold, and the power of living for ever. The detail of theſe ſecrets I omit; into that I am forbidden to enter. My deſign in writting this narrative, I have ſaid, is not to teach the art of which I am in poſſeſſion, but to deſcribe the advemures it produced to me.

The more I liſtened, the more my aſtoniſhment grew. I looked at the old man before me; I obſerved the wretchedneſs of his appearance, the meanneſs of his attire, his apparent old age, his extreme feebleneſs, the characters of approaching death that were written on his countenance. After what I had juſt heard, I ſurveyed theſe things with a ſenſation of novelty, as if I had never remarked them in him before. I ſaid to myſelf, is this the man, that poſſeſſes mines of wealth inexhauſtible, and the capacity of living for ever?

Obſerving that he had finiſhed his diſcourſe, I addreſſed to him theſe words, by a ſort of uncontrolable impulſe, and with all the vehemence of unſated and unſuppreſſible curioſity!

Tell me, I adjure you by the living God, what uſe have you made of theſe extraordinary gifts, and with what events has that uſe been attended?

As I ſpoke thus, the countenance of the old man underwent a ſurpriſing change. Its ſerenity vaniſhed; his eyes rolled with an expreſſion of agony; and he anſwered me thus:

Be

Be ſilent, St. Leon! How often muſt I tell you that no ſingle incident of my ſtory ſhall ever be repeated! Have I no claim upon your forbearance? Can you be barbarous and inhuman enough to diſturb my laſt ſcene with theſe bitter recollections?—I was ſilent.

This is all that is material, that paſſed at our interview.

The ſtranger died the next day, and was buried according to his inſtructions.

CHAP. XIV.

FROM the moment of my laſt interview with the ſtranger I was another creature. My thoughts inceſſantly rolled upon his communications. They filled me with aſtoniſhment and joy, almoſt to burſting. I was unable to contain myſelf; I was unable to remain in any poſture or any place. I could ſcarcely command myſelf ſufficiently to perform the laſt duties to his body in the manner he had directed. I paced with eager ſteps the ſands of the lake; I climbed the neighbouring hills, and then deſcended with inconceivable rapidity to the vales below; I traced with fierce impatience the endleſs mazes of the wood in which I ſo hardly recovered my bewildered gueſt. The uninterruptedneſs and ſwiftneſs of bodily motion ſeemed to communicate ſome eaſe to my ſwelling heart.

Yet there was one thing I wanted. I wanted ſome friendly boſom into which to pour out my feelings, and thus by participation to render my tranſports balſamic and tolerable. But this was for ever denied me. No human ear muſt ever be aſtoniſhed with the ſtory of my endowments and my privileges. I

may whiſper it to the woods and the waters, but not in the face of man. Not only am I bound to ſuppreſs the knowledge of the important ſecrets I poſſeſs, but even the feelings, the ruminations, the viſions, that are for ever floating in my ſoul. It is but a vain and frivolous diſtinction upon which I act, when I commit to this paper my hiſtory, and not the ſcience which is its corner-ſtone. The reaſon why the ſcience my not be divulged is obvious. Exhauſtleſs wealth, if communicated to all men, would be but an exhauſtleſs heap of pebbles and duſt; and nature will not admit her everlaſting laws to be ſo abrogated, as they would be by rendering the whole race of ſublunary man immortal. But I am bound, as far as poſſible, not only to hide my ſecrets, but to conceal that I have any to hide. Senſeleſs paper! be thou at leaſt my confidant! To thee I may impart, what my ſoul ſpurns the taſk to ſuppreſs. The human mind inſatiably thirſts for a confidant and a friend. It is no matter that theſe pages ſhall never be ſurveyed by other eyes than mine. They afford at leaſt the ſemblance of communication and the unburthening of the mind; and I will preſs the illuſion fondly and for ever to my heart.

To return to the explanation of my feelings immediately after receiving poſſeſſion of my grand acquiſition; for, without that explanation, the ſpirit and meaning of my ſubſequent narrative will ſcarcely be ſufficiently apprehended.

Happy, happy, happy man! exclaimed I in the midſt of my wanderings and reveries: Wealth! thy power is unbounded and inconceivable. All men bow down to thee; the moſt ſtubborn will is by thee rendered pliant as wax; all obſtacles are melted down and diſſolved by the ardour of thy beams! The man that poſſeſſes thee, finds every path

path level before him, and every creature burning to anticipate his wiſhes! But, if theſe are the advantages that wealth imparts to ſuch as poſſeſs only thoſe ſcanty portions which ſtates and nations allow to the richeſt, how enviable muſt his condition be, whoſe wealth is literally exhauſtleſs and infinite! He poſſeſſes really the bleſſing, which prieſtcraft and ſuperſtition have lyingly pronounced upon the charitable. He may give away the revenues of princes, and not be the poorer. He poſſeſſes the attribute which we are accuſtomed to aſcribe to the Creator of the univerſe. He may ſay to a man, Be rich, and he is rich. He can beſtow with equal facility the ſmalleſt giſts and the greateſt. Palaces, as if they were the native exhalations of the ſoil, riſe out of the earth at his bidding. He holds the fate of nations and of the world in his hand. He can remove foreſts, and level mountains, drain marſhes, extend canals, turn the courſe of rivers, and ſhut up the ſea with doors. He can aſſign to every individual in a nation the taſk he pleaſes, can improve agriculture and eſtabliſh manufactures, can found ſchools, and hoſpitals, and infirmaries and univerſities. He can ſtudy the genius of every man, and enable every man to purſue the bent of his mind. Poets and philoſophers will be foſtered, the ſublimeſt flights of genius be produced, and the moſt admirable diſcoveries effected, under his auſpicious patronage. The whole world are his ſervants, and he, if his temper be noble and upright, will be the ſervant of the whole world. Nay, it cannot happen otherwiſe. He has a few temptations to obliquity as omnipotence itſelf. Weakneſs and want are the parents of vice. But he poſſeſſes every thing; he cannot better his ſituation; no man can come into rivalſhip or competition with

him. I thank God, I have known the extremes of poverty, and am therefore properly qualified to enjoy my preſent happineſs. I have felt a reverſe of fortune, driving me in one inſtance to inſanity; in another inſtance threatening to deſtroy me, my wife and children together, with the plague of hunger. My heart has been racked with never-dying remorſe, becauſe, by my guilt and folly, my children have been deprived of the diſtinction and rank to which they were born, and plunged in remedileſs obſcurity. Heaven has ſeen my ſufferings, and at length has graciouſly ſaid, It is enough. Becauſe I have endured more than man ever endured from the privation of fortune, God in his juſtice has reſerved me for this ſecret of the tranſmutation of metals. I can never again fall into that wretchedneſs, by which my underſtanding was ſubverted, and my heart was broken.

From this part of the legacy of the ſtranger, my mind reverted to the other. I ſurveyed my limbs, all the joints and articulations of my frame, with curioſity and aſtoniſhment. What! exclaimed I, theſe limbs, this complicated, but brittle frame, ſhall laſt for ever! No diſeaſe ſhall attack it; no pain ſhall ſeize it; death ſhall withhold from it for ever his abhorred graſp! Perpetual vigour, perpetual activity, perpetual youth, ſhall take up their abode with me! Time ſhall generate in me no decay, ſhall not add a wrinkle to my brow, or convert a hair of my head to grey! This body was formed to die; this edifice to crumble into duſt; the principles of corruption and mortality are mixed up in every atom of my frame. But for me the laws of nature are ſuſpended; the eternal wheels of the univerſe roll backward; I am deſtined to be triumphant over fate and time!

Months

Months, years, cycles, centuries! To me all theſe are but as indiviſible moments. I ſhall never become old; I ſhall always be, as it were, in the porch and infancy of exiſtence; no lapſe of years ſhall ſubtract any thing from my future duration. I was born under Louis the Twelfth; the life of Francis the Firſt now threatens a ſpeedy termination; he will be gathered to his fathers, and Henry his ſon will ſucceed him. But what are princes and kings and generations of men to me? I ſhall become familiar with the riſe and fall of empires; in a little while the very name of France, my country, will periſh from off the face of the earth, and men will diſpute about the ſituation of Paris, as they diſpute about the ſcite of ancient Nineveh and Babylon and Troy. Yet I ſhall ſtill be young. I ſhall take my moſt diſtant poſterity by the hand; I ſhall accompany them in their career; and, when they are worn out and exhauſted, ſhall ſhut up the tomb over them and ſet forward.

There was ſomething however in this part of my ſpeculation that did not entirely pleaſe me. Methought the race of mankind looked too inſignificant in my eyes. I felt a degree of uneaſineſs at the immeaſurable diſtance that was now put between me and the reſt of my ſpecies. I found myſelf alone in the world. Muſt I for ever live without a companion, a friend, any one with whom I can aſſociate upon equal terms, with whom I can have a community of ſenſations, and feelings, and hopes, and deſires, and fears? I experienced ſomething leſs than a wiſh, yet a ſomething very capable of damping my joy, that I alſo were ſubject to mortality. I could have been well contented to be partaker with a race of immortals, but I was not ſatisfied to be ſingle in this reſpect. I was not pleaſed to recollect how trivial would appear to me

me thoſe concerns of a few years, about which the paſſions of men are ſo eagerly occupied. I did not like the deadneſs of heart that ſeemed to threaten to ſeize me. I began to be afraid of vacancy and torpor, and that my life would become too uniformly quiet. Nor did it ſufficiently conſole me, to recollect that, as one ſet of friends died off the ſtage, another race would ariſe to be ſubſtituted in their ſtead. I felt that human affections and paſſions are not made of this transferable ſtuff, and that we can love nothing truly, unleſs we devote ourſelves to it heart and ſoul, and our life is, as it were, bound up in the object of our attachment.

It was worſe when I recollected my wife and my children. When I conſidered for the firſt time that they were now in a manner nothing to me, I felt a ſenſation that might be ſaid to amount to anguiſh. How can a man attach himſelf to any thing, when he comes to conſider it as the mere plaything and amuſement of the moment! In this ſtatement however I am not accurate. Habit is more potent than any theoretical ſpeculation.—Paſt times had attached me deeply, irrevocably, to all the members of my family. But I felt that I ſhould ſurvive them all. They would die one by one, and leave me alone. I ſhould drop into their graves the ſtill renewing tear of anguiſh. In that tomb would my heart be buried. Never, never, through the countleſs ages of eternity, ſhould I form another attachment. In the happy age of deluſion, happy and auſpicious at leaſt to the cultivation of the paſſions, when I felt that I alſo was a mortal, I was capable of a community of ſentiments and a going forth of the heart. But how could I, an immortal, hope ever hereafter to feel a ſerious, an elevating and expanſive paſſion for the ephemeron of an hour!

As

As the first tmult of my thoughts subsided, I began, as it is usual with persons whose minds are turned loose in the search of visionary happiness, to picture to myself more steadily and with greater minuteness, the objects I would resolve early to accomplish. I would in the first place return to France, my adored country, the residence of my ancestors, whose annals they had adorned, whose plains had witnessed their heroic feats, and whose earth inclosed their ashes. To France I was endeared by every tie that binds the human heart; her language had been the prattle of my infancy; her national manners and tempers were twined with the fibres of my constitution, and cou'd not be rooted out; I felt that every Frenchman that lived was my brother. Banishment had only caused these prejudices to strike their tendrils deeper in my heart. I knew not that I should finally limit my abode to France. A man who, like Melchisedec, is "without end of life," may well consider himself as being also like him "without father, without mother, and without descent." But at all events, I would first fix my children, who did not participate in my privileges, in their native soil. I would reside there myself, at least till they were fully disposed of, and till the admirable partner of the last seventeen years of my life had resigned her breath. I would immediately repurchase the property of my ancestors, which had been so distressfully resigned. The exile should return from his seven years' banishment in triumph and splendour. I would return to the court of my old patron and friend, the gallant Francis, and present to him my boy, the future representative of my family, now one year older than I had been at the field of the Cloth of Gold. Tho' an exile from my country, I had not been an inattentive witness of her fortunes. The year fifteen hundred and forty-

four

four was a remarkable and intereſting year in the hiſtory of France. The endleſs animoſities of Francis and the emperor had broken out with new fury about two years before. In the ſpring of the preſent year, the count d'Anguien had won a battle in Piedmont*, in which ten thouſand Imperialiſts were left dead upon the field, and which might be conſidered as having at length effaced the defeat of Pavia, in the ſame part of the world nineteen years before. The moment it had been announced that a battle was reſolved on, the young nobility of France, with their characteriſtic ardour, had hurried to the ſcene, and the court of Paris was in an inſtant, as it were, turned into a deſert. On the other hand the emperor and the king of England had concerted for the ſame ſeaſon a formidable plan of attack againſt our northern frontier. With an army of twenty-five thouſand men reſpectively, the one on the ſide of Champagne, and the other of Picardy, they agreed to advance directly into the heart of the kingdom, and to unite their forces in the neighbourhood of Paris. The laſt intelligence that had reached me was, that Chateau Thierry, about twenty leagues from the metropolis, was in the hands of the emperor, and that the inhabitants of the capital, filled with conſternation, were ſeeking their ſafety by flight in every direction. Theſe circumſtances had paſſed idly by me, and left little impreſſion, ſo long as I conſidered myſelf as an obſcure peaſant, cut off for ever from the boſom of my country. But, veſted with the extraordinary powers now intruſted to me, the caſe was altered. I felt even a greater intereſt in my ſovereign, now preſſed down with diſeaſe and calamity, yet retaining the original alacrity and confidence of his ſoul, than I had done, when I ſaw him in all the pride of youth, and all the ſplendour of proſperity I was

† The battle of Ceriſolles.

was anxious that Charles ſhould now enter into his ſervice; and I determined once again to aſſume the cuiraſs and the faulchion, that I might be the inſtructor of his youth, and his pattern in feats of war. I reſolved that my ſhepherd-boy, bred in obſcurity among the woods and mountains, ſhould burſt with ſudden ſplendour upon his countrymen, and prove in the field his noble blood and generous ſtrain. I alſo propoſed to myſelf, both out of ſympathy for my king, and to give greater eclat to my ſon's entrance into life, to repleniſh with my treaſures the empty coffers of France, and thus to furniſh what at this period ſeemed to be the main ſpring upon which the fortune of war depended. With the advantages I could afford him, the career of Charles could not fail to be rapid and illuſtrious, and he would undoubtedly obtain the ſtaff of conſtable of France, the poſſeſſor of which, Montmorency, was now in diſgrace. I would marry my daughters to ſuch of the young nobility as I ſhould find moſt diſtinguiſhed in talents, and moſt ſpotleſs in character. When, by the death of her I moſt loved, my affections ſhould be weaned from my country, and the ſcenes to which I had been accuſtomed were rendered painful and diſtreſſing, I would then ſet out upon my travels. I would travel with ſuch ſplendour and profuſion of expence (for this, though mortified in me by a reverſe of many years duration, continued to be the foible of my heart) as ſhould ſuperſede the neceſſity of letters of recommendation, and ſecure me a favourable reception wherever I appeared. I might ſpend a life, in a manner, in every country that was fortunate enough to allure my ſtay, ſpreading improvements, diſpenſing bleſſings, and cauſing all diſtreſs and calamity to vaniſh from before me.

CHAP. XV.

MY mind was occupied in theſe and ſimilar reveries for ſeveral weeks after the death of the ſtranger. My wife and children had hoped, after that event, that I ſhould have returned to the habits which had pervaded the laſt ſix years of my exiſtence, and which they had felt ſo eminently productive of gratification and delight. In this hope they found themſelves deceived. My domeſtic character was, for the preſent at leaſt, wholly deſtroyed, I had a ſubject of contemplation that did not admit of a partaker, and from this ſubject I could not withdraw my thoughts, ſo much as for an inſtant. I had no pleaſure but in that retirement, where I could be unſeen and unheard by any human eye or ear. If at any time I was compelled to join the domeſtic circle, I diſpatched the occaſion that brought me there as ſpeedily as poſſible; and even while I remained in it, was ſilent and abſent, engroſſed with my own contemplations, and heedleſs and unobſervant of every thing around me.

My abſtraction was not however ſo entire as to prevent me from ſometimes ſtealing, in a ſort of momentary interregnum of thought, in that pauſe where the mind reſts upon the chain already paſſed over, and ſeems paſſively to wait for the ſequel, a glance at my family. I looked at them, without knowing what it was that I did, and without the intention to notice what I ſaw. Yet, even in this ſtate of mental abſtraction, viſible objects will ſometimes ſucceed in making their impreſſion. I perceived that my wife and children ſuffered from my behaviour. I remarked a general air of diſconſolateneſs, and a mild unexpoſtulating ſubmiſſion to what

what nevertheleſs the heart deeply deplored. They did not preſume to interrupt me; they did not by prying and inquiſitive ſpeeches attempt to extort from me the ſecret of the alteration they ſaw; but it was manifeſt they conceived ſome great and radical calamity had poiſoned the heart of our domeſtic joy.

It was theſe ſymptoms thus remarked by me, that firſt roufed me from the inebriation of my new condition. I was compelled to ſuſpect that, while I revelled in viſions of future enjoyment, I was inflicting ſevere and unmerited pains on thoſe I loved. It was neceſſary, if I valued their happineſs, that I ſhould deſcend from the clouds of ſpeculation and fancy, and enter upon the world of realities.

But here I firſt found a difficulty to which, during the reign of my intoxication, I had been utterly inſenſible. I was rich; I could raiſe my family, as far as the power of money extended, money which may in ſome ſenſe be ſtiled the empreſs of the world, to what heights I pleaſed. I had hitherto committed the fault, ſo common to projectors, of looking only to ultimate objects and great reſting places, and neglecting to conſider the ſteps between. This was an omiſſion of high importance. Every thing in the world is conducted by gradual proceſs. This ſeems to be the great principle of harmony in the univerſe. Nothing is abrupt; one thing is ſo blended and ſoftened into another, that is impoſſible to ſay where the former ends and the latter begins.

This remark is fully applicable to the ſituation which was now before me. Yeſterday I was poor; to-day I was poſſeſſor of treaſures inexhauſtible. How was this alteration to be announced? To diſſipate the revenues of princes, to purchaſe immenſe eſtates, to launch into coſtly eſtabliſhments,

are

are taſks to which the moſt vulgar mind is equal. But no man ſtands alone in the world, without all trace of what he has been, and with no one near that thinks himſelf entitled to ſcruminiſe his proceedings and his condition. Leaſt of all was this my caſe. I was bound to certain other perſons by the moſt ſacred of all obligations; I could not ſeparate myſelf from them; I could not render myſelf a mere enigma in their eyes; though, in the language of the world, the head of my family, they were my natural cenſors and judges. I was accountable to them for my conduct; it was my duty, paramount to all other duties, to ſtand as a fair, upright and honourable character in their eyes.

If theſe remarks be true taken in a general view, they are much more ſo, when applied to my particular caſe. There are men who live in the midſt of their families, like an eaſtern deſpot ſurrounded with his ſubjects. They are ſomething too ſacred to be approached; their conduct is not to be reaſoned upon; the amount of their receipts and diſburſements is not to be inſpected; their reſources are unknown; no one muſt ſay to them, What doſt thou? or, why haſt thou thus conducted thyſelf? Even theſe perſons will not eſcape the tax to which all men are liable. They cannot kill the general ſpirit of enquiry; the myſtery in which they wrap themſelves will often ſerve as an additional ſtimulus; they will finally encounter the judgment and verdict of all. For myſelf, I had lived in the midſt of my family upon a ſyſtem of paternal and amicable commerce. I had ſuffered too deeply from a momentary ſeaſon of ſeparation and myſtery, not to have been induced to renounce it deciſively and for ever.

Firm however as I had imagined my renunciation to have been, I was now thrown back upon what

what I had moſt avoided. I had a ſecret ſource of advantage, the effects of which were to be participated by thoſe I loved, while the ſpring was to remain for ever unknown. What I moſt ſought upon this occaſion, was, that my family ſhould ſhare my good fortune, and at the ſame time be prevented from ſo much as ſuſpecting that there was any thing myſterious connected with it. To effect this, I preſently conceived that it would be neceſſary, to ſacrifice the ſudden and inſtantaneous proſperity I had propoſed to myſelf, and introduce the reverſe of our condition by ſlow and, as far as poſſible, inſenſible degrees.

One thing on which I determined, preparatory to the other meaſures I had in view, was to remove from my preſent habitation, and take up reſidence for a time in the city of Conſtance. In the cottage of the mountains it was impoſſible to make any material alteration in my eſtabliſhment. My property was of narrow extent, nor would it be eaſily practicable, in a country, the inhabitants of which were accuſtomed to an equal allotment, conſiderably to enlarge it. My houſe was ſmall; and, unleſs it were firſt pulled down and built over again, the attempt to introduce ſervants, equipage or ſplendour into it, would be ridiculous. My deſign was not to make a long abode where I now was; but, as ſoon as my family ſhould be ſufficiently prepared for the tranſition, to return to my native country. I believed that, in the capital of the biſhopric, where my name was ſcarcely remembered by a ſingle individual, I ſhould be more at liberty to proceed as circumſtances ſuggeſted, than in my preſent rural ſituation, where every neighbour regarded himſelf as veſted with a ſort of inquiſitorial power over all around him.

To

To account for this meaſure to my family, I felt it incumbent on me to confeſs to them a certain pecuniary acquiſition. The ſtory that moſt readily ſuggeſted itſelf was that of the ſtranger having left behind him a certain ſum of which he made a donation to me. This, though in the plain and direct ſenſe of the terms it were falſe, yet in its ſpirit bore a certain reſemblance to the truth; and, with that reſemblance, in ſpite of the rigid adherence to veracity, that firſt ornament of a gentleman, that moſt eſſential pre-requiſite to the regard and affection of others, which I had hitherto maintained, I was induced to content myſelf. What could I do? I was compelled to account for appearances; I was forbidden by the moſt ſolemn injunctions to unfold the truth. I ſhould indeed have felt little complacence in the diſcloſure; I ſhould have been reluctant to announce a circumſtance, which as I already began to feel, introduced a permanent difference and ſeparation between me and my family.

The ſum at which I fixed the legacy of the ſtranger was three thouſand crowns. I was not inattentive to the future; I ſhould have been glad, by my preſent account, to have furniſhed a more ample ſolution for circumſtances which might occur hereafter. But ſome regard was to be paid to probability. An unknown, a ſolitary man, broken with age, who arrived on foot, and who declined all aid and attendance, muſt not be repreſented as poſſeſſing mines of treaſure.

It was ſometime before I could prevail on myſelf to break my ſtory to the inhabitants of my cottage. As the time approached when I was to bid an everlaſting farewel to rural obſcurity and humble ſtation, they ſeemed to adorn themſelves in new charms. I was like the ſon of a king, who had hitherto been told by his attendants that he

he was a mere villager, and who, while his youthful imagination is dazzled by the ſplendour that awaits him, yet looks back with a wiſtful eye upon his mirthful ſports, his former companions, and the ſimple charms of her who firſt obtained his guileleſs love. I announced my acquiſition and my purpoſe with a faltering tongue and a beating heart.

I could perceive that my tale produced few emotions of pleaſure in thoſe who heard it. Julia and her mother eſpecially were warmly attached to their retirement, and the ſcenes which had witneſſed ſo many pleaſurable incidents and emotions. Chagrin, in ſpite of themſelves, made a tranſient abode upon their countenances; but the unreſiſting mildneſs of the one, and the conſiderate attachment of the other, prevented for the preſent their ſenſations from breaking out into words. The feelings however that they conſigned to ſilence, did not entirely eſcape the notice of the lively little Marguerite. She ſympathiſed with them, probably without being aware that they were ſad. She came towards me, and, with much anxiety in her enquiring face, aſked why we muſt go away from the cottage? If I had got ſome money, I might go to the town, and buy ſome ſweetmeats, and ribbands, and new clothes, and a hundred more pretty things, and bring them home. For her part, ſhe ſhould be better pleaſed to put on her finery and make her feaſt in the pretty, old ſummer-houſe, now ſhe was again permitted to go and play in it, than in a palace all ſtuck over with emeralds and rubies. Her mother wiped away a tear at the innocent ſpeech of her darling; kiſſed her, and bid her go and feed the hen and her chickens. Charles was the only one in whom I could obſerve any pleaſure at my intelligence. He

was

was not as yet ſkilful enough to calculate the advantages that three thouſand crowns could purchaſe. But I could ſee joy ſparkle in his eyes, as I announced my intention of bidding adieu to retirement, and taking up my reſt in the capital of the diſtrict. His veins ſwelled with the blood of his anceſtors; his mind was inured to the contemplation of their proweſs. Already ſixteen years of age, he had ſecretly burned to go forth into the world, to behold the manners of his ſpecies, and to eſtabliſh for himſelf a claim to ſome rank in their eſtimation. He had pined in thought at the mediocrity of our circumſtances, and the apparent impoſſibility of emerging; for he regarded the duty of contributing his labour to the ſubſiſtence of the family, as the firſt of all obligations, and the more the bent of his ſpirit ſtruggled againſt it, the more reſolutely he ſet himſelf to comply.

The reſt of the family were no ſooner retired to reſt, than Marguerite, finding in what I had juſt announced to all an occaſion from the uſe of which ſhe could not excuſe herſelf, took this opportunity of unburthening the grief which had long been accumulating in her mind.

St. Leon, ſaid ſhe, liſten kindly to what I am going to ſay to you, and aſſure yourſelf that I am actuated by no ſpleen, reſentment or ill-humour, but by the trueſt affection. I perceive I have loſt, in your apprehenſion, the right of adviſing you. I am no longer the partner of your counſels; I am no longer the confident of your thoughts. You communicate nothing but what you cannot ſuppreſs, and that you communicate to your whole family aſſembled. Heaven knows how dear to me is every individual of that family! But my love for them does not hide me from what is due to myſelf. I know that a huſband, who feſt as a

huſband

husband ought, and, give me leave to say, as I have deserved, you should feel towards me, could not have acted as you have acted to night.

You must excuse my reminding you of some things which you seem to have forgotten. I would not mention them, if they had not been forgotten when they ought to have been remembered. I have lived seventeen years with you; my whole study has been your advantage and pleasure. Have you any thing to reproach me with? Point out to me, if any thing I could have added to your pleasure, and have neglected it! What I have done, has not been the ceremonious discharge of a duty; it has been the pure emanation of an attachment that knew no bounds. I have passed with you through good fortune and ill fortune. When we were rich, I entered with my whole heart into your pleasures, because they were yours. When we were poor, I endured every hardship without a murmur; I watched by you; I consoled you, I reconciled you to yourself. I do not mean to make a merit of all this; no, Reginald! I could not have acted otherwise if I would.

Do me the justice to recollect that I have not been a complaining or irritable companion. In all our adversities, in the loss of fortune and the bitter consequences of that loss, I never uttered a reproachful word. What poverty, sorrow, hunger and famine never extorted from me, you have at length wrung from my bleeding heart. St. Leon! I have known your bosom thoughts. In no former instance has your affection or your confidence been alienated from me, and they consoled me for all the rest. But now, for three months the case has been entirely altered. You have during all that time been busy, pensive and agitated; but I have been as much a stranger to your meditations as if I had

had never been accuſtomed to be their depoſitory. You have not ſcrupled to inflict a wound upon me that no ſubſequent change will ever be able to cicatriſe. Nor indeed do I ſee any likelihood of a change. You announce our removal to Conſtance; what we are to do next, with what views or for what purpoſe, I am ignorant.

I have made my election. My heart is formed for affection, and muſt always feel an uneaſy void and deſolation without it. If you had thus robbed me of your attachment in an early period of our intercourſe, I know not upon what extremity my diſappointment and anguiſh might have driven me. They are harder to bear now; but I ſubmit It is too late either for relief or remedy. What remains of my powers and my ſtrength I owe to my children. I will not ſeduce them from their father. They may benefited by his purſe or his underſtanding, though, like me, they ſhould be deprived of his affection. You may be their friend when I am no more. I feel that this will not laſt long. I feel that the main link that bound me to exiſtence cannot be ſnapped, and thus ſnapped by unkindneſs worſe than death, without promiſing ſoon to put a period to my miſeries. I ſhall be your victim in death, after having devoted my life to you, in a way in which few women were ever devoted to their huſbands.

But this is not what I purpoſed chiefly to ſay. This is what my ſituation and my feelings have unwillingly wrung from me. Though you have injured me in the tendereſt point, I ſtill recollect what you were to me. I ſtill feel deeply intereſted in your welfare, and the fair fame you are to tranſmit to your children. I intreat you then to reflect deeply, before you proceed further. You ſeem to me to ſtand upon a precipice; nor do the alteration

tion that has taken place in your manners, and the revolution of your heart, lead me to augur favourably of the plans you have formed. What is this ſtranger? Whence came he? Why did he hide himſelf, and why was he purſued by the officers of juſtice? Had he no relations? Was his bequeſt of the ſum he had about him his own act, and who is the witneſs to its deliberateneſs or its freedom? You muſt not think that the world is inattentive to the actions of men or their circumſtances; if it were, the fame we prize would be an empty bauble. No, ſir, a fair fame can only be ſecured by unequivocal proceedings. What will, what can be thought of your giving ſhelter to an unknown, a man accuſed of crimes, a man never beheld even by an individual of your family, and upon the ſtrength of whoſe alleged bequeſt, you are about to change the whole mode of your life?

Nor, Reginald, muſt you think me credulous enough to imagine that you have now diſcloſed the whole or the preciſe truth. Three thouſand crowns is not a ſum ſufficient to account for what you propoſe, for the long agitation of your thoughts, or for the change of character you have ſuſtained. You muſt either be totally deprived of rational judgment, or there muſt be ſomething behind, that you have not communicated. What do you purpoſe in going to reſide in the midſt of a city, foreign to the manners of a Frenchman, diſtracted with internal broils, and embittered to us by the recollection of the extremities we perſonally ſuffered in it? Is your ambition ſunk ſo low, that it can be gratified by ſuch a tranſition? No; you mean more than you have announced; you mean ſomething you are unwilling to declare. Conſider that meaning well! Put me out of the queſtion!

I am

I am nothing, and no longer desire to be any thing. But do not involve yourself in indelible disgrace, or entail upon your memory the curses of your children!

What a distress was mine, who, in return to so generous and noble an expostulation, could impart no confidence, and indulge no sincerity! I felt a misery, of which, till this hour, I had been unable to form a conception. Fool that I was, I had imagined that, when endowed with the bequests of the stranger, no further evil could approach me! I had, in my visionary mood, created castles and palaces, and expatiated in the most distant futurity; and here I was, stopped and disappointed at the threshold, in the very first step of my proceedings! What I could however, I did; I poured forth to Marguerite, not the secrets of my understanding, but the overpowering emotions of my soul.

Best, most adorable of women! cried I, how you rend my heart with the nobleness of your remonstrances! Never was a man blessed with a partner so accomplished and exemplary as I have been! Do you think your merits can ever be obliterated from my memory? Do you think the feeling of gratitude and admiration can ever be weakened in my bosom, or that the strength and singleness of my attachment can suffer decay? Bear me witness, heaven! I know no creature on the face of the earth that can enter into competition with you; there is not the thing in nature that I prize in comparison. I love you a thousand times better than myself, and would die with joy to purchase your ease and satisfaction. I can never repay the benefits you have conferred on me; I can never rise to an equality with you.

What anguish then do you inflict upon me, when you talk of becoming the victim of my unkindness?

kindneſs? Believe you I can endure, after having diſſipated your patrimony and drawn you with me into exile, after having experienced from you a tenderneſs ſuch as man never in any other inſtance obtained from woman, to entertain the idea of embittering the remainder of your life, and ſhortening your exiſtence! I ſhould regard myſelf as the moſt execrable of monſters. I could not live under the recollection of ſo unheard-of a guilt. If you would not have me abhor myſelf and curſe exiſtence, live, confide in me, and be happy!

Oh, Marguerite! how wretched and pitiable is my ſituation! Make ſome allowance for me! I have a ſecret, that I would give worlds to utter, but dare not. Do not imagine that there is, or can be any decay in my affection! Confide in me! Allow to neceſſity, what never, never could be the reſult of choice! in all things elſe, you ſhall know my inmoſt heart, as you poſſeſs the boundleſs and unalterable affection of my ſoul!

Marguerite was ſomewhat, but not wholly ſoothed by the earneſtneſs of my proteſtations. She ſaw, for the preſcience of the heart is never deceived, that a blow was given to the entireneſs of our affection, from which it would never recover. She felt, for in truth and delicacy of ſentiment ſhe was much my ſuperior, that the reſerve, in which I perſiſted, and for which I deprecated excuſe, might be ſufficiently conſiſtent with a vulgar attachment, but would totally change the nature of ours. She was aware that it related to no ordinary point, that it formed the pole-ſtar of my conduct, that it muſt preſent itſelf afreſh from day to day, and that in its operation it amounted to a divorce of the heart. She ſubmitted however, and endeavoured to appear chearful. Though ſhe felt

the

the worm of ſorrow gnawing her vitals, ſhe was unwilling to occaſion me an uneaſineſs it was in her power to withhold. She was ſtruck with the conſiſtency and determination of my reſiſtance, and expoſtulated no more.

We went to Conſtance. We bade adieu to the ſcene of a ſix years' happineſs, ſuch as the earth has ſeldom witneſſed. I alone had occaſioned ſome imperfection in that happineſs. There were times indeed when, ſitting in affectionate communion with my wife, and ſurrounded by my children, my ſenſations had been as exquiſitely delicious as the ſtate of human exiſtence ever had to boaſt. I felt my heart expand; I was conſcious to the unreſerved union that ſubſiſted among us; I felt myſelf identified with all that I loved, and all for whom my heart was anxious. But the curſe entailed upon me from the earlieſt period to which my memory can reach, operated even in the cottage of the lake. I was not formed to enjoy a ſcene of paſtoral ſimplicity. Ambition ſtill haunted me; an uneaſineſs, ſcarcely defined in its object, from time to time recurred to my mind. If I thought I wanted nothing for myſelf, I deemed a career of honour due to my children. Again, when I regarded honour as an empty phantom, and perſuaded myſelf that all conditions of life were intrinſically equal, I recollected the fearful ſcene where hunger and deſtruction had hung over us in Conſtance, and in imagination often pictured to myſelf that ſcene as on the point of being renewed. The ſword of the demon famine, ſeemed to my diſturbed apprehenſion, to be ſuſpended over us by a hair. Such had been the draught of bitterneſs that occaſionally detracted from this moſt enviable, as in retroſpect I am willing to denominate it, period of my exiſtence.

We

We quitted our rural retreat, and took up our abode in a proſperous mercantile city. I hired commodious apartments in one of the grand ſquares, not far from the ſpot where the fairs are uſually held. Undoubtedly there was nothing in this reſidence very congenial to the bent of my diſpoſition, or the projects that fermented in my mind. I had merely choſen it by way of interval, and to ſoften the tranſition from what I had been, to what I purpoſed to be. In the multitude of irreſolute thoughts with which I laboured, the ſmall diſtance of Conſtance from the cottage of the lake, made me feel as if the removal thither was one of the gentleſt and moſt moderate meaſures to which I could have recourſe.

I had never been leſs happy and at peace with myſelf than I was now. From general ſociety and the ordinary intercourſe of acquaintance I had long been eſtranged, and it was in vain that I now endeavoured to return to habits of that ſort. The ſociety which the city of Conſtance afforded, had few charms for me. It had no pretenſions to the politeneſs, the elegance, the learning or the genius, an intercourſe with which had once been familiar to me. It ſcarcely contained within its walls any but ſuch as were occupied in merchandiſe or manufacture. The attention of its inhabitants were divided between theſe objects, and the incroachments which were making upon the ancient religion by the Confeſſion of Augſburgh and the dogmas of Calvin. The majority of the inhabitants were Proteſtants; and, a few years before, they had expelled their biſhop and the canons of their cathedral. Having however miſcarried in a religious war into which they had entered, theſe dignitaries had been reinſtalled in their functions and emoluments. The ſituation thus produced

was

was an unnatural one; and a ſtorm was evidently brewing more violent than any which the city had yet ſuſtained. The gloomy temper and melancholy auſterity of the reformers were as little congenial to my temper, as the ſordid ignorance and ſelfiſhneſs of the trading ſpirit of the community.

I therefore lived in a ſtate of ſecluſion. I endeavoured to ſeek amuſement in ſuch novelties and occupations as might preſent themſelves to a perſon diſengaged from the general vortex. But if, the diſtinguiſhed ſphere in which I had once moved diſqualified me for taking an intereſt in theſe puerilities, the anticipation in which I indulged of the future diſqualified me ſtill more. My domeſtic ſcene too no longer afforded me the conſolation and relief I had been accuſtomed to derive from it. Marguerite exerted herſelf to appear chearful and contented; but it was an exertion. I began to fear that the arrow of diſappointment had indeed ſtruck upon her heart. I was anxiouſly occupied in conſidering what I was to do next. I hoped that our next ſtep might operate to revive her gaiety, and by additional ſplendour amuſe her ſolicitude. I began to fear that I had taken a wrong method, and entered the career of a better fortune with too much caution and timidity. At all events I felt that we no longer lived together as we had done. There was no more opening of the heart between us, no more infantine guileleſſneſs and ſincerity, no more of that unapprehenſive expoſure of every thought of the ſoul, that adds the pureſt zeſt to the pleaſures of domeſtic life. We ſtood in awe of each other; each was to the other in ſome degree an intruſive and unwelcome ſpy upon what was ſecretly paſſing in the heart. There

may

may be perſons who regard this as an evil very capable of being endured; but they muſt be ſuch as never knew the domeſtic joys I once experienced. The fall from one of theſe conditions of life to the other, was too bitter.

CHAP. XVI.

ANXIOUS to divert my thoughts from what I hoped was only a temporary evil, I determined, accompanied by Charles, to make a tour of ſome of the cities of Germany. Dreſden was the capital to which I was moſt deſirous of conducting him. Maurice, duke of Saxony, who held his court there, and who was now only twenty-three years of age, was incomparably the moſt accompliſhed prince of the empire. Deſirous as I was that my only ſon ſhould fill a diſtinguiſhed career I thought I could not better prepare him for the theatre of his native country, than by thus initiating him beforehand in ſcenes of diſtinction and greatneſs.

He was exceedingly delighted with his tour. We had not proceeded many leagues from Conſtance, before, indulging the bent of my mind, I laid aſide the humbleneſs of my appearance, and the obſcure ſtyle in which we travelled; and having procured a numerous cavalcade of horſes and ſervants, I ſet forward with conſiderable magnificence. We paſſed through Munich, Ratiſbon and Prague. At Munich we found the court of the elector Palatine; the diet of the empire was ſitting at Ratiſbon, when we arrived at that city.

Charles had been almoſt entirely a ſtranger to every thing princely and magnificent from the time that he was nine years of age; and he was now exactly at that period of human life, when external appearances are apt to make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion. To him every thing that occurred ſeemed like a tranſportation into a new world. The figure we made procured us as ſtrangers unqueſtioned admiſſion into every circle. We mixed with princes, ourſelves, in garb and figure, confounded with thoſe we ſaw. I had lived too much and too long in the moſt ſplendid ſociety, to find any difficulty in reſuming the unembarraſſed and courtly manners which I had for years laid aſide; and Charles might be ſaid to ſee his father in a new character. Novelty prompted his admiration; he was intoxicated with wonder. His diſpoſition had always led him to bold and adventurous conceptions; nothing leſs than an imperious ſenſe of duty could have reſtrained him from quitting our humble cottage, and caſting himſelf upon the world in ſearch of honour and diſtinction. His generous heart had beat to burſt away from the obſcurity of his ſtation; and it was with impatience and diſcontent that he looked forward to the life of a ſwain. Yet he knew not how to break through the obſtacles that confined him. It was therefore with tranſports of delight that he ſaw them vaniſhing as of themſelves, and the career of glory opening, as if by enchantment, to his eager ſteps.

The court of Dreſden was infinitely more delightful to him than the court of Munich, or the imperial diſplay of Ratiſbon. Here Charles ſaw a young prince in the flower of his age, whoſe talents and ſpirit rendered him the univerſal object of attention and adoration. He remarked, in the

fire of his eyes, the vivacity of his geſtures, and the grandeur of his port, ſomething inexpreſſibly different from thoſe princes, of whom it is neceſſary that their rank ſhould be announced to you by ſome extrinſic circumſtance, that you may not miſtake them for a merchant's clerk, or a city-magiſtrate. The ſentiment that he breathed as it were inſtinctively, as we returned from the firſt time of our ſeeing duke Maurice, was, At twenty-three years of age may I, in appearance, accompliſhments and ſpirit, reſemble this man!

Here I was deſirous of making a longer ſtay than at the cities through which we had previouſly paſſed, and of procuring for my ſon ſome perſonal intercourſe with this great ornament of the age in which we lived. I judged this to be the more eaſy, as, in our firſt viſit to the palace, I had perceived ſome French noblemen of the Proteſtant perſuaſion, who had reſorted to the duke's court in ſearch of employment. They appeared not to know me, but that was little to be wondered at, conſidering that I had been ſeven years abſent from my country, and that the calamities by which I had been overtaken more than once during that period, might be ſuppoſed to have produced a greater effect on me than the mere lapſe of years would have done. Among the reſt I remarked Gaſpar de Coligny, who was only twenty-one years of age at the time I quitted France, and had then been remarked as one of the moſt promiſing young men his country had to boaſt. His ſtay here was expected to be ſhort; his hopes in his own country, from the greatneſs of his connexions, were of the higheſt claſs; and he had only come to Dreſden at the earneſt invitation of duke Maurice, who entertained an ardent affection for him. My heart led me towards

him; policy concurred in dictating the application, as, if I were fortunate enough to gain his favour, my ſon could not have a friend better qualified, either to form his character, or forward his advancement.

I wrote to Coligny to announce my requeſt to him, and, in a few hours after the delivery of my letter, that young nobleman came in perſon to wait on me. He informed me that he had done ſo, becauſe he had ſomething of delicacy to mention, which he did not chuſe to truſt to the interminſion of a third perſon, and upon which, as he hoped I could remove his ſcruple, he did not like even to beſtow the formality of putting it on paper.

I am a gentleman of France, ſaid Coligny; you will excuſe my frankneſs. I am a gentleman of France; you will not wonder at the niceneſs of my honour. Mixing in ſociety, I do not pretend minutely to inveſtigate the character of every perſon with whom I converſe; but what you aſk of me, obliges me to conſult my underſtanding, and enquire into facts. I cannot conſent to vouch for any man's character to another, till I have paid ſome attention to the ground upon which that character reſts.

I remember the count de St. Leon with pleaſure and advantage at the court of my own ſovereign. Every one admired his accompliſhments, his gallantry and his learning; every one ſpoke of him with reſpect. Unfortunate circumſtances, as we all underſtood, deprived you of your patrimony; that is nothing to me; I reſpect a nobleman in misfortune, as much as when he is ſurrounded with wealth and ſplendour. You retired into voluntary exile; I heard with great grief, of ſome ſubſequent calamities that have overtaken you. But,

here

here in Saxony, I see you resuming all your former splendour, and coming forward with the magnificence of a prince. Other of your countrymen have marked it, as well as myself, and feel themselves at a loss to account for what they see.

Excuse me, count! by your application to me, you oblige me to speak freely. I dare say, you can clear up the difficulty, and account for this second revolution in your fortune, upon which I shall then be the first to congratulate you. I cannot suspect a man with your high descent and the illustrious character you formerly mintained, of any thing dishonourable. But you have not sufficiently considered the account we all owe to one another, and the clearness of proceeding we are obliged to maintain, not only to our own hearts, but in the face of the world. The present occasion is, I trust, fortunate for you; and, when you have assisted me in complying with the rules by which every honourable man governs himself, I shall be eager to publish your justification, and render you all the service in my power.

I was ready to burst with astonishment and vexation during this representation of Coligny. I could feel my colour change from pale to red, and from red to pale. I could only answer with suffocation and inward rage, that I was much obliged to him; I would consider what he said; I would acquaint him with my justification; and, whenever it was made, he might be assured it should be an ample one.—I was cautious as to what I uttered; I could not immediately foresee what it was eligible, or what it was possible to do; and I was resolved that I would not, by an idle or hasty expression, preclude myself, in a matter of so much moment, from the benefits of future deliberation. If what I had just heard had come from any other

person,

perſon, I ſhould probably have deſpiſed it; but I felt at once that Gaſpar de Coligny might be conſidered, in a caſe of this ſort, as the repreſentative of all that was moſt honourable and illuſtrious in my native country.—Finding that I was indiſpoſed to any further communication on the ſubject, he took a polite leave and departed.

I was no ſooner alone, than I felt myſelf overwhelmed with mortification and ſhame. I had rejoiced in the bequeſts of the ſtranger, becauſe I regarded them as the means of reſtoring me to ſplendour, and replacing my children in the ſituation to which they were entitled by their birth. Was that which I had regarded as the inſtrument of their glory, to become the medium of their ignominy and diſgrace? I had ſuffered all other misfortunes, but the whiſper of diſhonour had never been breathed againſt me. I was a ſon of honour, deſcended of a race of heroes, and cradled in the lap of glory and fame. When we quitted Paris in the year 1537, my incomparable wife had ſet to ſale our entire property, reſolved that, though driven into exile, we would not leave it in the power of the meaneſt individual to controvert the ſacred attention we yielded to every juſt obligation. Since that time I had declined from the ſplendour of rank to the humble ſituation of a ruſtic, cultivating my little property with my own hands; nay, I had even, for a ſhort time, hired myſelf as a labourer in the garden of the biſhop of Conſtance. But the ſame diſdain of every thing diſgraceful had followed me to my cottage and my truckle bed, which I had originally learned in the halls of chivalry and the caſtle of my anceſtors. Accordingly I had uniformly retained the ſame honourable character and ſpotleſs fame. St. Leon, the virtuous cottager, had in nothing blemiſhed the name of St. Leon, ſurrounded

with

with glory in the ſiege of Pavia. Often, and with pride, had I pointed out this circumſtance to my ſon, adding, Wherever fortune calls you, for whatever ſcenes you may be reſerved, remember that your father was unfortunate, but that through life he never acted a deed nor conceived a thought, that ſhould ſtain your manly cheek with the bluſh of ſhame! I ſtand before you a culprit, as having robbed you of your patrimony, but I have preſerved for you entire the inheritance of our honour!

This had been the firſt leſſon imprinted upon my infant mind. All other poſſeſſions I had ever held cheap and worthleſs in compariſon with that of an illuſtrious name. My indignation at the attack it now ſuſtained, was boundleſs. The more I thought, the more intolerable it appeared. I was impatient and furious, like a lion ſtruggling in the toils. I could with joy have trampled under my feet, whoever aſperſed me. I could have wantoned in blood, and defied my adverſaries to mortal combat. Alas, all my fury was uſeleſs here! It was no tale whiſpered in the dark that I had to contend with; it was the commentary of the world upon inconteſtible facts. Though a hecatomb of ſouls ſhould be ſacrificed at the ſhrine of my blaſted name, the facts would ſtill remain, the myſtery ſtill require to be ſolved. Coligny, the virtuous Coligny, had made no obſervations on the circumſtances he mentioned; he merely propoſed a difficulty, and waited my anſwer.

I was called upon to exerciſe the whole of my deliberative powers, as to the reply which was to be returned, or the conduct to be held, upon the queſtion of Coligny. Every thing I moſt valued was now at iſſue, and a falſe ſtep taken under the preſent circumſtances could never be retrieved. I had another ſort of party to deal with here, than

whe

when I had told Marguerite the tale of the ſtranger and his legacy. Nothing would paſs now, but what bore an open, fair and unequivocal appearance. I muſt tell no tale that could not bear to be ſifted to the bottom, and that did not fully accord with all the vouchers with which it could be collated. I had written to Marguerite, immediately after launching into the expence with which our tour had been attended, that I had received an unexpected acquiſition from the death of a relation of my own family in France. I knew that the ſtory of the three thouſand crowns would no longer account for the ſtyle in which I was proceeding, and this fabrication ſuggeſted itſelf upon the ſpur of the moment. I hated to think of the difficulties in the way of explanation in which I was involved; I abhorred the ſyſtem of falſhood I was driven to practiſe. It did not occur to me at the time, infatuated as I was! that I ſhould have occaſion to account for this acceſſion of wealth to any one out of my own family. Marguerite, I well knew, had no correſpondence in France, nor therefore any obvious means of verifying or refuting this ſecond deception. But ſuch a ſtory could not be told to noblemen of France, without being inſtantly liable to be compared with known facts, and eventually inveſtigated upon the ſpot where the ſcene was laid. Marguerite herſelf, I well knew, had liſtened with incredulity to the explanation I had made and the alleged legacy of the ſtranger; what could I expect from ſtrangers? They might not all poſſeſs her good ſenſe and ſagacity in judging; but they were deſtitute of that perſonal kindneſs and partiality, which were calculated to induce her to credit whatever I affirmed. Moſt men have a malignant pleaſure in the detection of ſpecious pretences in humbling the importunate ſuperiority that obſcures

their

their claims, and removing the rival who might otherwiſe acquire the prize of which they are in purſuit.

My mind was ſtill torn and diſtracted with theſe contemplations, when in the evening of the ſame day on which I had received the viſit of Coligny, my attention was ſuddenly rouſed by the abrupt entrance of my ſon into the chamber where I was ſitting. He opened the door with a hurried action as he entered, and, having cloſed it impetuouſly after him, advanced directly towards me. He then ſtopped himſelf; and, turning from me, I could perceive a ruſh of crimſon in his face like that of a man ſuffocated. A paſſion of tears ſucceeded, that ſhook his frame, and ſufficiently proved that his feelings had ſuſtained ſome extraordinary ſhock. My whole ſoul was alarmed at what I ſaw; and, following him as he retired to the other ſide of the room, in the gentleſt accents I endeavoured to ſoothe him, while I enquired with earneſtneſs and trepidation into the cauſe of his grief.

CHAP. XVII.

HE repelled me. Sit down, ſir, ſit down! Do not follow me, I beg of you; but ſit down!

His manner was earneſt and emphatical. Mechanically and without knowing what I did, I obeyed his directions. He came towards me.

I have no time, added he, for qualifying and form. Tell me! am I the ſon of a man of honour, or a villain?

He ſaw I was ſhocked at the unexpected rudeneſs of his queſtion.

Forgive me, my father! I have always been affectionate and dutiful; I have ever looked up to you as my model and my oracle. But I have been insulted! It never was one of your lessons to teach me to bear an insult!

Is it, replied I, with the sternness that the character of a father will seldom fail to inspire under such circumstances, because you have been insulted, that you think yourself authorised to come home and insult him to whom you owe nothing but respect and reverence?

Stop, sir! Before you claim my reverence, you must shew your title to it, and wipe off the aspersions under which you at present labour.

Insolent, presumptuous boy! Know that I am not by you to be instructed in my duty, and will not answer so rude a questioner! The down as yet scarcely shades your school boy's cheek; and have you so forgot the decencies of life as to scoff your father?—His eye brightened as I spoke.

You are right, Sir! It gives me pleasure to see your blood rise in return to my passion. Your accent is the accent of innocence. But, indeed! the more innocent and noble you shall prove yourself, the more readily will you forgive my indignation.

I cannot tell. My temper does not fit me to bear the rudeness of a son. Nor do I think that such behaviour as this can be any credit to you, whatever may have been the provocation. Tell me however what is the insult that has thus deeply shaken you!.

I went this afternoon to the tennis-court near the river, and played several games with the young count Luitmann. While we were playing, came in the chevalier Dupont, my countryman. The insolence of his nature is a subject of general remark; and he has, though I know not for what reason,

reaſon, conceived a particular animoſity to me. A trifling diſpute aroſe between us. We gradually warmed. He threatened to turn me out of the court; I reſented the inſult; and he paſſionately anſwered that the ſon of an adventurer and a ſharper had no buſineſs there, and he would take care ſhould never be admitted again. I attempted to ſtrike him, but was prevented; and preſently learned that the ſudden and unexplained way in which we have emerged from poverty, was the ground of his aſperſion. As I gained time, and reflected more diſtinctly upon what was alleged, I felt that perſonal violence could never remove an accuſation of this ſort. I ſaw too, though intoxicated, as I had idly been, with the unwonted ſplendour to which I was introduced, I had not adverted to it at the time, that the caſe was of a nature that required explanation; and I retired in ſilence, determined, if poſſible, effectually to obliterate the ignominy to which I was expoſed.

To you, ſir, I reſort for explanation. Send me back to the inſolent youth and his companions, with a plain and unanſwerable tale, that may put to ſilence for ever theſe brutal ſcoffs and reproaches. Let it be ſeen this night which of the two has moſt fully merited to be thruſt out of honourable ſociety. I truſt, I have not ſo demeaned myſelf, but that our mutual companions will join to compel this unmannered boor to retract his aſperſions.

Charles, you are too warm and impetuous!—

Too warm, ſir! when I hear my father loaded with the foulеſt appellations?

You are young, and ill-qualified to terminate in the proper way a buſineſs of this ſerious aſpect: leave it to me!

Excuſe

Excuſe me, my father! Though the names I have repeated were beſtowed upon you, it was againſt me that the inſult was employed. I muſt return immediately, and obtain juſtice. This is a moment that muſt in ſome degree fix my character for fortitude and determination, and I cannot withdraw from the duty it impoſes. Only tell me what I have to ſay. Furniſh me with a direct and unambiguous explanation of what Dupont has objected to us, and I undertake for the reſt.

I ſee, my ſon, that you are moved, and I will truſt you!

He ſeized my hand, he gazed earneſtly in my face, he ſeemed prepared to devour every word I ſhould utter.

Gaſpar de Coligny, the flower of the French nobility, has been with me this morning. He has ſtated, to me in an ingenuous and friendly way the ſame difficulty, with which Dupont has ſo brutally taunted you. I was meditating and arranging my anſwer but now, when you entered the room.

As I uttered theſe words, Charles let go my hand, and withdrew his eyes, with evident tokens of diſappointment and chagrin. He pauſed for a few moments, and then reſumed:

Why do you tell me of meditation and arrangement? Why did you ſend away Coligny unanſwered, or why baffle and evade the earneſtneſs of my enquiries? I know not all the ſources of wealth; but I cannot doubt that the medium through which wealth has honourably flowed, may, without effort and premeditation, eaſily be explained. A juſt and a brave man acts fearleſsly and with explicitneſs; he does not ſhun, but court,

court the ſcrutiny of mankind; he lives in the face of day, and the whole world confeſſes the clearneſs of his ſpirit and the rectitude of his conduct.

Sir, I have juſt ſet my foot on the threſhold of life. There is one leſſon you have taught me which I ſwear never to forget; to hold life and all its advantages cheap, in compariſon with an honourable fame. My ſoul burns with the love of diſtinction. I am impatient to burſt away from the goal, and commence the illuſtrious career. I feel that I have a hand and a heart capable of executing the purpoſes that my ſoul conceives. Uninured to diſhonour, or to any thing that ſhould controul the paſſion of my boſom, think, ſir, what are my emotions at what has juſt occurred.

I was bred in obſcurity, and a humble ſtation. I owed this diſadvantage, you tell me, to your error. I forgave you; I was content; I felt that it was incumbent on me by my ſword and my own exertions to hew my way to diſtinction. You have ſince exchanged the lowneſs of our ſituation for riches and ſplendour. At this revolution I felt no diſpleaſure; I was well ſatisfied to ſtart upon more advantageous terms in the race I determined to run. But, ſir, whence came theſe riches? Riches and poverty are comparatively indifferent to me; but I was not born to be a mark for ſhame to point her finger at. A little while ago you were poor; you were the author of your own poverty; you diſſipated your paternal eſtate. Did I reproach you? No; you were poor, but not diſhonoured! I attended your couch in ſickneſs; I exerted my manual labour to ſupport you in affliction. I honoured

you

you for your affection to my mother; I liſtened with tranſport to the hiſtory of your youth; I was convinced I ſhould never bluſh to call Reginald de St. Leon my father. I believed that leſſons of honour, ſo impreſſive as thoſe you inſtilled into my infant mind, could never flow but from an honourable ſpirit. Oh, if there is any thing equivocal or ignoble in the riches we have diſplayed, reſtore me, inſtantly reſtore me to unblemiſhed and virtuous poverty!

I was aſtoniſhed at the firmneſs and manlineſs of ſpirit that Charles upon this occaſion diſcovered. I could ſcarcely believe that theſe were the thoughts and words of a youth under ſeventeen years of age. I felt that every thing illuſtrious and excellent might be augured of one who, at theſe immature years, manifeſted ſo lofty and generous a ſoul. I could have preſſed him in my arms, have indulged my emotions in ſobs and tears of tranſport, and congratulated myſelf that I was father to ſo worthy a ſon. But his temper and manners awed, and held me at a diſtance. This was one conſequence of the legacies of the ſtranger!

Charles! ſaid I, your virtues extort my confidence. For the world a tale muſt be prepared that ſhall ſerve to elude its curioſity and its malice. But to you I confeſs, there is a myſtery annexed to the acquiſition of this wealth that can never be explained.

He ſtood aghaſt at my words. Am I to believe my ears? A tale prepared! A myſtery never to be explained! I adjure you by all that you love, and all that you hold ſacred——!

His voice was drowned in a ſudden guſh of tears. With an action of earneſtneſs and deprecation, he took hold of my hand.

No,

No, ſir, no artful tale, no diſguiſe, no hypocriſy!——As he ſpoke, his voice ſuddenly changed, his accent became clear and determined.—Will you conſent this very hour to quit the court of Dreſden, and to reſign fully and without reſerve this accurſed wealth, for the acquiſition of which you refuſe to account?

Whence, replied I, have you the inſolence to make ſuch a propoſal?——No, I will not!

Then I ſwear by the omnipreſent and eternal God, you ſhall never ſee or hear of me more!

I perceived that this was no time for the aſſertion of paternal authority. I ſaw that the poor boy was ſtrangely and deeply moved, and I endeavoured to ſoothe him. I felt that the whole courſe of his education had inſpired him with an uncontrolable and independent ſpirit, and that it was too late to endeavour to repreſs it.

My dear Charles, ſaid I, what is come to you? To hear the ſtrange language you employ, I ſhould ſcarcely know you. This impertinent Dupont has put you quite beſide yourſelf. Another time we will talk over the matter calmly, and depend upon it, every thing ſhall be made out to your ſatisfaction.

Do not imagine, ſir, that my ſelf-poſſeſſion is not perfect and complete. I know what I do, and my reſolution is unalterable. If you have any explanation to give, give it now. If you will yield to my propoſal, declare your aſſent and I am again your ſon. But to bear the inſults of my fellows unanſwered, or to live beneath the conſciouſneſs of an artful and fictitious tale, no conſideration on earth ſhall induce me. I love you, ſir; I cannot forget your leſſons or your virtues. I love my mother and my ſiſters; no

words can tell how dearly and how much. But my reſolution is taken; I ſeparate myſelf from you all and for ever. Nothing in my mind can come in competition with a life of unblemiſhed honour.

And are you ſuch a novice, as to need the being told that honour is a prize altogether out of the reach of an unknown and deſolate wanderer, ſuch as you propoſe to become? My wealth, boy, is unlimited, and can buy ſilence from the malicious, and ſhouts and applauſe from all the world. A golden key unlocks the career of glory, which the mean and the pennyleſs are never allowed to enter.

I am not ſuch a novice, as not to have heard the language of vice, though I never expected to hear it from a father. Poverty with integrity ſhall content me. The reſtleſs eagerneſs of my ſpirit is ſo great, that I will truſt to its ſuggeſtions, and hope to ſurmount the obſtacles of external appearance. If I am diſappointed in this, and deſtined to periſh unheard of and unremembered, at leaſt I will eſcape reproach. I will nether be charged with the deeds, nor give utterance to the maxims of diſhonour.

Charles, replied I, be not the calumniator of your father! I ſwear to you by every thing that is ſacred; and you know my integrity; never did the breath of falſehood pollute theſe lips———

He paſſionately interrupted me. Did the ſtranger bequeath you three thouſand ducats? Have you lately received an unexpected acquiſition by the death of a near relation in France?

I was ſilent, this was not a moment for trifling and equivocation.

Oh,

Oh, my father, how is your character changed and ſubverted! You ſay true. For ſixteen years I never heard a breath of falſehood from your lips; I truſted you, as I would the oracles of eternal truth. But it is paſt! A few ſhort months have polluted and defaced a whole life of integrity. In how many obſcurities and fabulous inconſiſtencies have you entangled yourſelf? Nor is it the leaſt of the calamities under which my heart ſickens at this moment, that I am reduced to hold language like this to a father!

What miſery was mine to hear myſelf thus arraigned by my own ſon, and to be unable to utter one word in reply to his accuſations! To be thus triumphed over by a ſtripling; and to feel the moſt cruel degradation, in the manifeſtation of an excellence that ought to have ſwelled my heart with gratulation and tranſport! I had recollected my habitual feelings for near forty years of exiſtence; I had dropped from my memory my recent diſgrace, and dared to appeal to my acknowledged veracity; when this retort from my ſon came to plunge me tenfold deeper in a ſea of ſhame. He proceeded.

I am no longer your ſon! I am compelled to diſclaim all affinity with you! But this is not all. By your diſhonour, you have cut me off from the whole line of my anceſtors. I cannot claim affinity with them, without acknowledging my relation to you. You have extinguiſhed abruptly an illuſtrious houſe. The ſun of St. Leon is ſet for ever! Standing as I do a candidate for honourable fame; I muſt henceforth ſtand by myſelf, as if a man could be author of his own exiſtence, and muſt expect no aid, no favour, no prepoſſeſſion, from any earthly conſideration, ſave what I am and what I ſhall perform.

My

My ſon, replied I, you cut me to the heart. Such is the virtue you diſplay, that I muſt confeſs myſelf never to have been worthy of you, and I begin to fear I am now leſs worthy of you than ever. Yet you muſt ſuffer me to finiſh what I was about to ſay when you ſo paſſionately interrupted me. I ſwear then by every thing that is ſacred, that I am innocent. Whatever interpretation the world may put upon my ſudden wealth, there is no ſhadow of diſhoneſty or guilt connected with its acquiſition. The circumſtances of the ſtory are ſuch that they muſt never be diſcloſed: I am bound to ſecrecy by the moſt inviolable obligations, and this has led me to utter a forged and inconſiſtent tale. But my conſcience has nothing with which to reproach me. If then, Charles, my ſon, once my friend, my beſt and deareſt conſolation!——I preſſed his hand, and my voice faltered as I ſpoke——if you are reſolute to ſeparate yourſelf from me, at leaſt take this recollection with you wherever you go,—Whatever may be my external eſtimation, I am not the ſlave of vice, your father is not a villain!

Alas, my father! rejoined Charles mournfully, what am I to believe? What ſecret can be involved in ſo ſtrange a reverſe of fortune that is not diſhonourable? You have given utterance to different fictions on the ſubject, fictions that you now confeſs to be ſuch; how am I to be convinced that what you ſay at this moment is not dictated more by a regard for my tranquillity, than by the ſimplicity of conſcious truth? If I believe you, I am afraid my credit will be the offspring rather of inclination, than of probability. And indeed, if I believe you, what avails it? The world will not believe. Your character is blaſted; your honour is deſtroyed; and, unleſs I ſeparate myſelf from

you

you and diſown your name, I ſhall be involved in the ſame diſgrace.

Saying thus, he left me, and in about half an hour returned. His return I had not foreſeen; I had made no uſe of his abſence. My mind was overcome, my underſtanding was ſtupified, by a ſituation and events I had ſo little expected. I had ſtood, unmoved, leaning againſt the wall, from the inſtant of his departure. I ſeemed rooted to the ſpot, incapable of calling up my fortitude, or arranging my ideas. My eyes had rolled, my brow was knit, I had bit my lips and my tongue with agony. From time to time, I had muttered a few words,—My ſon! my ſon!—wealth! wealth! —my wife!—my ſon!—but they were incoherent and without meaning.

Charles re-entered the apartment where the preceding converſation had paſſed, and the noiſe he made in entering rouſed me. He had his hat in his hand, which he threw from him, and exclaimed with an accent of dejection and anguiſh, My father!—farewell!

Cruel, cruel boy! can you perſiſt in your harſh and calamitous reſolution? If you have no affection for me, yet think of your mother and your ſiſters!

Seek not, ſir, to turn me from my purpoſe! The ſtruggle againſt it in my own boſom has been ſufficiently ſevere, but it muſt be executed.—His voice as he ſpoke was inward, ſtifled and broken with the weight of his feelings.

Then—farewell! I replied. Yet take with you ſome proviſion for your long and perilous adventure. Name the ſum you will accept, and, whatever is its amount, it ſhall inſtantly be yours.

I will have nothing. It is this wealth, with whoſe ſplendour I was at firſt child enough to be dazzled,

dazzled, that has deſtroyed us. My fingers ſhall not be contaminated with an atom of it. What is to be my fate, as yet I know not. But I am young, and ſtrong, and enterpriſing, and courageous. The leſſons of honour and nobility live in my boſom. Though my inſtructor is loſt, his inſtructions ſhall not be vain!

Once more farewell! From my heart I thank you for your proteſtations of innocence. Never will I part with this laſt conſolation, to believe them. I have recollected the manner in which they were uttered; it was the manner of truth. If there be any evidence of a contrary tendency, that I will forget. Though to the world I ſhall be without father, and without relatives, I will ſtill retain this ſacred conſolation for my hours of retirement and ſolitude, that my anceſtors were honourable, and my father, in ſpite of all preſumptions to the contrary,—was innocent!

How hard it is to quit for ever a family of love and affection as ours has been! Bear witneſs for me, how deeply I ſympathiſed with you at Paris, in Switzerland, in Conſtance! Though now you diſſolve the tie between us, yet till now, never had a ſon greater reaſon for gratitude to a father. You and my mother have made me what I am; and that I may preſerve what you have made me, I now caſt myſelf upon an untried world. The recollection of what I found you in the paſt period of my life, ſhall be for ever cheriſhed in my memory!

I quit my mother and my ſiſters without leave-taking or adieu. It would be a fruitleſs and painful addition to what each party muſt learn to bear. Dear, excellent, peerleſs protector and companions of my early years! my wiſhes are yours, my prayers ſhall be for ever poured out for you! You, ſir, who rob them of a ſon and a brother, be careful

to

to make up to them a loſs, which I doubt not they will account grievous! I can do nothing for them. I can throw myſelf into the arms of poverty; it is my duty. But, in doing ſo, I muſt ſeparate myſelf from them, aſſuredly innocent, and worthy of more and greater benefits than I could ever confer on them!—Farewell!

Saying this, he threw himſelf into my arms, and I felt the agonies of a parting embrace.

CHAP. XVIII.

FOR ſome time I could not believe him departed. When I retired to reſt, I felt the want of Charles to preſs my hand, and wiſh me refreſhing ſlumbers; and I paſſed on, ſad and ſolitary, to my chamber. When I came next morning into the breakfaſting room, Charles was not there, to greet me with looks of affection and duty; and the gilding and ornaments of the apartmens were to me no leſs diſconſolate than the damps and ſootineſs of a dungeon.

I hoped he would return. I knew how tenderly he was attached to his mother and his ſiſters; I was fully convinced that the affection for me which had been the perpetual habit of his mind, could not be entirely eradicated from his heart. I mentioned him not in my letters to Conſtance; the pen lingered, my hand trembled, when I thought of him; I could neither pretend that he was with me, nor announce the cataſtrophe of his abſence. But I opened the letter of Marguerite with ſtill increaſing impatience. Finding that he did not return to me, I hoped that ſome alteration of the extraordinary reſolution he had formed would lead

him

him to Conſtance. In vain I hoped! There reached me, by no conveyance, from no quarter, tidings of my ſon!

How ſurpriſing an event! A youth, not ſeventeen years of age, forming and executing in the ſame inſtant the purpoſe of flying from his parents and his family! Deſerting all his hopes, all his attachments, all his fortune! Refuſing the ſmalleſt particle of aſſiſtance or proviſion in his entrance upon the wide ſcene of the world! Oh, Charles! exclaimed I, you are indeed an extraordinary and admirable youth! But are you fortified againſt all the temptations of the world and all its hardſhips? Do your tender years qualify you to ſtruggle with its unkindneſs, its indifference and its inſults? In how few quarters is merit ever treated with the attention and benevolence it deſerves! How often is it reduced to tremble with indignation at the ſcoffs and brutality to which it is expoſed, and at the ſight of folly and vice exalted in its ſtead, and appointed its deſpot and its maſter! My ſon, my ſon! what will be your fate? Is your unſeaſoned frame reſerved to periſh by hunger, in barren deſerts and beneath inclement ſkies? Will you not in ſome hour of bitter diſappointment and unpitied lonelineſs, lay yourſelf down in deſpair and die? Will you not be made the ſlave of ſome capricious tyrant for bread? Generous as is your nature, will it be eternally proof againſt reiterated temptation? Upon what world are you turned adrift? a world of which you know as little, as the poor affrighted ſoul of a dying man knows, when launching into the myſterious, impenetrable abyſs of eternity! Unnatural father, to have reduced my only ſon to this cruel alternative! I ſhould with a leſs aching and agoniſing heart have accompanied his ſenſeleſs remains to the grave. Dreadful as that

parting

parting is, there at leaſt the anxious mind of the ſurvivor has reſt. There are no thoughts and devices in the ſilence of the tomb. There all our proſpects end, and we are no longer ſenſible to pain, to perſecution, to inſult and to agony. But Charles, thus departed, wandering on the face of the globe, without protector, adviſer or reſource, no lapſe of years can put a cloſe upon my anxiety for him! If I am in eaſe and proſperity, I cannot reliſh them, for my expoſed and living ſon may be at that moment in the depth of miſery! If I am myſelf oppreſſed and ſuffering, the thought of what may be his fate, will form a dreadful addition to all my other calamities! What am I to ſay of him upon my return to Conſtance? If he had died, this was a natural caſualty; and, whatever grief it might occaſion, time no doubt would mollify and abate it But what account can now be rendered of him to his diſconſolate mother and terrified ſiſters? How can I lift up my head in their preſence, or meet the glance of their reproachful eyes!

The idea had occurred to me, in the inſtant of Charles's departure, and immediately after his exit, of detaining or bringing him back by force. He was by his extreme youth, according to the maxims of the world, ſtill in a ſtate of guardianſhip, and unqualified to be the chooſer of his own actions. But to this mode of proceeding, however deeply I felt the cataſtrophe which had taken place, I could never conſent It was in utter hoſtility to the leſſons of chivalry and honour, with which I had been familiariſed from my earlieſt infancy. There might be many caſes, in which this reſtraint laid by a father upon his child would be ſalutary. But the idea which had occaſioned the receſſion of Charles, was deciſive in this inſtance,

ſtance. What right had I to claim him to diſhonour? The whole bent of his education had been to impreſs him with the feelings by which he was now actuated. If I detained him for a ſhort time, was there any vigilance on earth that could finally prevent him from executing a purpoſe upon which his whole ſoul was reſolved? Or, ſuppoſe there were, muſt not the conſequence be to break his ſpirit, to deprive him of all manlineſs and energy, and to render him the more drooping and ſoulleſs ſhadow of that conſpicuous hero I had been anxious to make him? It might be ſaid indeed, that this was the determination of a boy, formed in an hour, and that, if I detained him only long enough for deliberation and reviſal, he would then of his own accord retract ſo deſperate a project. But I felt that it was a reſolution formed to endure, and was built upon principles that could not change ſo long as an atom of his mind remained. No; I was rather diſpoſed to ſay, however grievous was the wound he inflicted on me, Go, my ſon! Act upon the dictates of your choice, as I have acted on mine! I admire your reſolution, though I cannot imitate it. Your purpoſe is lofty and godlike; and he that harbours it, was not born to be a ſlave. Be free; and may every power propitious to generoſity and virtue, ſmooth your path through life, and ſmile upon your deſires!

The anguiſh I felt for having loſt my ſon, and in this painful and reproachful manner, was not diminiſhed to me either by ſociety or amuſement. I dared not go out of my houſe. I ſaw no one but my own attendants. I had not the courage to meet the countenance of a human creature. I knew not how far perſons in Dreſden might have heard the injurious reports which had occaſioned the flight of my ſon, or even have been acquainted with

with the nature of that flight. I had promiſed to ſee Coligny again, but, alas! the affair which had at firſt led me to wiſh to ſee him, was now at an end. I had no heart to ſeek him; nor indeed did I know what ſtory I was to tell him, or how I was to remove the ſuſpicions he had urged againſt me. The machine of human life, tho' conſtituted of a thouſand parts, is in all its parts regularly and ſyſtematically connected; nor is it eaſy to inſert an additional member, the ſpuriouſneſs of which an accurate obſervation will not readily detect. How was I to aſſign a ſource of my wealth different from the true, which would not be liable to inveſtigation, and, when inveſtigated, would not be ſeen to be counterfeit? This indeed is the prime ſource of individual ſecurity in human affairs, that whatever any man does, may be ſubjected to examination, and whatever does not admit of being ſatisfactorily accounted for, expoſes him whom it concerns to the moſt injurious ſuſpicions. This law of our nature, ſo ſalutary in its general operation, was the firſt ſource of all my misfortunes.

I began now ſeriouſly to conſider what judgment I was to paſs upon the bequeſts of the ſtranger. Were they to be regarded as a benefit or a misfortune? Ought they to be ſet on a par with the poiſoned robe of Neſſus, which being ſent as a token of affection, was found in the experiment, to eat into the fleſh, and burn up the vitals, of him that wore it? Should I from this inſtant reject their uſe, and returning to the modes of life eſtabliſhed among my fellow men, content myſelf with the affection of thoſe with whom I had intercourſe, though poverty and hardſhips ſhould be mingled with the balm?

The experiment I had made of theſe extraordinary gifts was a ſhort one; but how contrary were all the reſults I had arrived at, from thoſe I looked for? When the ſtranger had arrived ſix months before at the cottage of the lake, he had found me a poor man indeed, but rich in the confidence, and happy in the ſecurity and content, of every member of my family. I lived in the boſom of nature, ſurrounded with the luxuriance of its gifts, and the ſublimity of its features, which the romantic elevation of my ſoul particularly fitted me to reliſh. In my domeſtic ſcene I beheld the golden age renewed, the ſimplicity of the paſtoral life without its groſſneſs, a ſituation remote from cities and courts, from traffic and hypocriſy, yet not unadorned with taſte, imagination and knowledge. Never was a family more united in ſentiments and affection. Now all this beauteous ſcene was defaced! All was ſilence, ſuſpicion and reſerve. The one party dared not to be ingenuous, and the other felt that all the paradiſe of attachment was dwindled into an empty name. No queſtions were aſked; for no honeſt anſwer was given or expected. Tho' corporeally we might ſit in the ſame apartment, in mind a gulph, wide, impaſſable and tremendous, gaped between us. My wife pined in ſpeechleſs grief, and, it was to be feared, had ſuſtained a mortal blow. My ſon, my only ſon, a youth of ſuch promiſe that I would not have exchanged him for empires, had diſappeared, and, as he had ſolemnly averred, for ever. My heart was childleſs; my boſom was bereaved of its deareſt hope. It was for him principally that I had accepted, that I had rejoiced in, the gifts of the ſtranger. My darling viſion was to ſee him clothed in the harneſs, ſurrounded with the inſignia, of a hero. There was nothing I had

ſo earneſtly deſired, as that his merits, graced with the favours of fortune, might cauſe him to ſtand confeſſed the firſt ſubject of France, a ſituation more enviable than that of its monarch, ſince he who holds it, is raiſed by deeds and the other only by birth, and if leſs reſpected by intereſted courtiers, is certain to be more honoured by the impartial voice of hiſtory. But, if I felt thus deſolate and heart-broken for the loſs of my ſon, what would be the ſentiments of his mother, more ſuſceptible to feel, and in her preſent weakneſs of ſpirits, leſs vigorous to bear than myſelf, when the dreadful tidings ſhould be communicated to her?

Yet I could not reſolve to renounce donations which I had ſo dearly appropriated. I held it to be baſe and cowardly to ſurrender gifts ſo invaluable, upon ſo inſufficient an experiment. He, I thought muſt be a man of ignoble and groveling ſpirit, who could eaſily be prevailed on to part with unbounded wealth and immortal life. I had but juſt entered upon the vaſt field that was open to me. It was of the nature of all great undertakings, to be attended with difficulties and obſtacles in the commencement, to preſent a face calculated to diſcourage the man that is infirm of purpoſe. But it became my deſcent, my character and pretenſions, to ſhew myſelf ſerene in the midſt of ſtorms. Perſeverance and conſtancy are the virtues of a man. Affairs of this extenſive compaſs often prove in the iſſue the reverſe of what they ſeemed in the outſet. The tempeſt might be expected to diſperſe, difficulties to unravel themſelves, and unlooked for concurrences to ariſe. All oppoſition and hoſtile appearance give way before him who goes calmly onward, and ſcorns to be diſmayed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

IT was thus that I ſpurred myſelf on to perſiſt in the path upon which I had entered. Having remained ſome time at Dreſden encouraging myſelf with the hope that Charles might yet join me before I quitted that city, I began to think of once more turning my ſteps towards the reſidence of the reſt of my family. This was no chearful thought, but upon what was I to determine? I had a wife whom I ardently loved, and three daughters the darlings of my heart. Becauſe I had loſt a beloved ſon, was I to eſtrange myſelf from the reſt of my kindred? I already felt moſt painfully the detachment and widowhood to which I was reduced, and I clung with imperious affection to what remained of my family. The meeting I purpoſed muſt be a melancholy one; but, in the ſorrows of the heart there is a purer and nobler gratification, than in the moſt tumultuous pleaſures we can partake while affection is ſilent. I looked forward indeed to ſcenes of endleſs variety and attraction, but in the mean time what ſeemed firſt to demand my attention was the beloved circle I had left behind in the city of Conſtance.

I retraced upon the preſent occaſion the route I had lately purſued with my ſon. How different were now my ſenſations? My heart was then indeed painfully impreſſed with the variance and diſſolution of confidence that had ariſen between me and his mother. It was perhaps principally for the ſake of baniſhing this impreſſion that I had recourſe to the ſplendour of equipage and attendance which was firſt aſſumed upon the journey from Conſtance to Dreſden. Nor, frivolous as this expe-

dien,

dient may now appear in the unattractive diſpaſſionateneſs of narrative, had it been by any means weak of effect at the time it was employed. When Charles was once mounted on his proud and impatient ſteed, and decorated in rich and coſtly attire, I felt as it were the ſluggiſhneſs of my imagination rouſed; I ſurveyed his ſhape and his countenance with inexpreſſible complacence; and already anticipated the period when he was to become the favourite of his ſovereign, and his country's pride. Now I returned with the ſame retinue but the place that had been occupied by my ſon was empty. I ſought him with frantic and reſtleſs gaze, I figured him to my diſturbed and furious imagination, till the ſenſations and phantoms of my brain became intolerable; I raved and imprecated curſes on myſelf. I endeavoured to divert my thoughts by obſerving the ſcenes that paſſed before me. They talked to me of Charles; they had been pointed out by each to each, and had been the ſubject of our mutual comment. Though Charles was endowed with a high reliſh for the beauties of nature, and, in our little retreat on the borders of the lake, had lived in the midſt of them, he had ſeen little of the variety of her features; and the journey we had made through the heart of Germany had furniſhed him with continual food for admiration and delight. Nor did the ſcenes I beheld merely remind me of the ſenſations they produced in Charles; they led me through a wider field, I recollected long converſations and digreſſive excurſions which have been ſtarted by the impreſſion they made. I recollected many paſſages and occurrences to which they had not the ſlighteſt reference, but which, having ariſen while they conſtituted the viſible ſcene, were forcibly revived by its reappearance. Thus, from various

cauſes

cauſes, my loſt and lamented ſon was not a moment out of my thoughts during the whole journey. While I continued at Dreſden, I ſeemed daily to expect his return; but no ſooner did I quit that city, than deſpair took poſſeſſion of my heart.

Thus anxious and diſtreſſed, I arrived at Prague, and ſoon after at Ratiſbon. I travelled ſlowly, becauſe, though I was deſirous of returning to Conſtance, I anticipated my arrival there with little complacence.

As I drew nearer to my family, I felt more diſtinctly the impoſſibility of preſenting myſelf before them, without firſt endeavouring to take off the ſhock they would ſuſtain at ſeeing me return without my ſon. I therefore reſolved to ſend forward a ſervant from Ratiſbon, whom I directed to make all poſſible ſpeed, as I deſigned to wait for the anſwer he ſhould bring me at the city of Munich. To attempt to write to Marguerite on this ſubject, was a ſevere trial to me. The whole however that I propoſed to myſelf was to remove the ſurpriſe that would be occaſioned by ſeeing me alone, and to anticipate queſtions which it would be impoſſible for me to hear without anguiſh of mind and perturbation of countenance. I therefore took care to expreſs myſelf in ſuch terms as ſhould lead Marguerite to believe that I had voluntarily left her ſon in Saxony, and that in no very long time he would rejoin his family. I truſted to ſubſequent events to unfold the painful cataſtrophe, and could not prevail on myſelf to ſhock her maternal feelings ſo much as I muſt neceſſarily do, if I informed her of the whole at once. Charles had not been mentioned but in an ambiguous manner, in the letters I had recently received from Conſtance, and I was therefore convinced that he had neither gone to that place, nor conveyed thither any account of his proceedings.

The

The anſwer I received from Marguerite by my meſſenger was as follows:

"Your abſence has been long and critical, and the welfare of your daughters ſeems to require that we ſhould rejoin each other as ſpeedily as may be. Whether we ſhall meet here or at any other place you muſt determine. It is however right I ſhould inform you that, during your abſence, rumour has been buſy with your reputation. What the extent or importance of the ill reports circulated of you may be, I am ſcarcely competent to judge. We have lived in uniform privacy, and it is natural to ſuppoſe that the portion of cenſure that has reached us, is but a ſmall part of what really exiſts. The mode in which you have proceeded, and the extraordinary figure you have made in a progreſs through Germany, have given weight to theſe inſinuations—But it is not my intention to comment on what you have done.

"You appear to deſign by your letter that I ſhould underſtand you have left my ſon behind you in Saxony. Poor Charles! I had an epiſtle from him three weeks ago, in which he informs me of what has happened, and apologiſes in the moſt pathetic terms for any ſeeming want of regard to me in his conduct, at the very moment that his heart bleeds for my fate. I did not think it neceſſary to communicate this circumſtance to you. I have done with complaining. Now that I have fallen into the worſt and moſt unlooked for misfortunes, I have a gratification that I do not chooſe to part with, in ſhutting up my ſorrows in my own breaſt.

"Oh, Charles, my ſon, my idol! What is become of you? For what calamities are you reſerved? He tells me it is neceſſary that I ſhould never ſee or hear of him again. Never—I—his mother!

mother!—Reginald, there are ſome wounds that we may endeavour to forgive; but they leave a ſentiment in the heart, the demonſtrations of which may perhaps be reſtrained, but which it is not in nature wholly to ſubdue. If I did but know where to find or to write to my poor boy, I would take my girls with me and partake his honeſt and honourable poverty, and never again join the ſhadow of him who was my huſband. Forgive me Reginald! I did not intend to ſay this! If I ſhould prove unable to controul the impatience of my grief, do not inflict the puniſhment of my offence on your innocent daughters!

"As to your fiction of voluntarily leaving him behind for further improvement, it is of a piece with every thing you have lately attempted to make me believe. I no longer expect truth from you. For ſeventeen years I had a huſband. Well, well! I ought not perhaps to repine. I have had my ſhare of the happineſs which the preſent life is calculated to afford.

"Reginald! I have not long to live. When I tell you this, I am not giving way to melancholy preſentiment. I will exert myſelf for the benefit of my girls. They will have a grievous loſs in me, and for their ſake I will live as long as I can. But I feel that you have ſtruck me on the heart. My nights are ſleepleſs; my fleſh is waſted; my appetite is entirely gone. You will preſently be able to judge whether I am deceiving myſelf; the proſpect for theſe poor creatures, who are at preſent all my care, is a diſmal one. I know not for what they are reſerved, but I can hope for nothing good. When I am dead, remember, and be a father to them. I aſk nothing for myſelf; I have no longer any perſonal concern with life; but, if my dying requeſt can have any weight with you,

make

make up to them them the duty you have broken to me. By all our paſt loves, by the cordiality and confidence in which we have ſo long lived, by the ſingleneſs and ſincerity of our affection, by the pure delights ſo ſeldom experienced in married life, that have attended our union, I conjure you liſten to me and obey me in this !"

If I were deeply diſtreſſed for the loſs of my ſon, if I looked forward with a mingled ſenſation of eagerneſs and alarm to the approaching interview with the reſt of my family, it may eaſily be imagined that this letter formed a heavy addition to my mental anguiſh. I confeſs I thought it a cruel one. Marguerite might well ſuppoſe that the departure of Charles was a circumſtance I muſt ſtrongly feel, and ſhe ſhould not have thus ſeverely aggravated the recent wounds of paternal grief. Some allowance however was to be made for a mother. When we are ourſelves racked with intolerable pain, that certainly is not the time at which we can rationally be expected to exert the niceſt and moſt vigilant conſideration for another. Add to which ſhe was innocent of the calamities ſhe ſuffered, and could not but know that I was their ſole author. But whatever may be decided as to the propriety of the letter, its effect upon my mind was eminently ſalutary. I inſtantly determined on the conduct it became me to purſue

I loſt not a moment. From Dreſden to Munich I had advanced with ſlow and unwillings ſteps; from Munich to Conſtance I proceeded as rapidly, as my conveyance and the nature of the roads would permit. I left my retinue at the gates of the town, and flew inſtantly to the apartments of my family. I haſtened up ſtairs, and, as I entered the ſitting room, I ſaw the firſt and moſt exemplary

of matrons furrounded by her blooming daughters. I inſtantly perceived a great alteration in her appearance. Her look was dejected; her form emaciated; her countenance ſickly and pale. She lifted up her eyes as I entered, but immediately dropped them again, without any diſcernible expreſſion either of congratulation or reſentment. I embraced my children with undeſcribable emotion; I ſaid within myſelf, the love and affection I had reſerved for Charles, ſhall be divided among you, and added to the ſhare you each already poſſeſs of my heart! Having ſaluted them in turn, I addreſſed myſelf to Marguerite, telling her that I muſt have ſome converſation with her inſtantly. My manner was earneſt; ſhe led the way into another apartment.

I felt my heart overflowing at my tongue.

I am come to you, cried I a repenting prodigal. Take me and mould me at your pleaſure!

She looked up. She was ſtruck with the honeſt fervour of my expreſſion. She anſwered in almoſt forgotten terms, and with a peculiar fulneſs of meaning, my huſband!—It ſeemed as if the beſt years and the beſt emotions of our life were ſuddenly renewed.

Moſt adorable of women! I continued: do you think I can bear that you ſhould die, and I your murderer? No man in any age or climate of the world ever owed ſo much to a human creature as I owe to you; no woman was ever ſo ardently loved; no woman ever ſo much deſerved to be loved! If you were to die, I ſhould never know peace again. If you were to die the victim of any miſcalculation of mine, I ſhould be the blackeſt of criminals!

Reginald! replied ſhe, I am afraid I have been wrong. I am afraid I have written harſhly to you.

You

You have a feeling heart, and I have been too ſevere. Forgive me! it was the effect of love. Affection cannot view with a tranquil eye the faults of the object beloved.

Let it be forgotten! Let the laſt ſix months be blotted from our memory, be as though they had never exiſted!

She looked at me. Her look ſeemed to ſay, though ſhe ſhould not give the ſentiment words, That can never be; the loſs of Charles, and certain other calamities of that period are irretrievable!

I reſign myſelf into your hands! I have been guilty; I have had ſecrets; meditations engendered and ſhut up in my own boſom; but it ſhall be ſo no more! The tide of affection kept back from its natural channel, now flows with doubled impetuouſneſs. Never did I love, not when you firſt came a virgin to my arms, not on the banks of the Garonne, not in the cottage of the lake, ſo fervently, ſo entirely, as I love you now! Be my director; do with me as you pleaſe! I have never been either wiſe or virtuous, but when I have been implicitly guided by you!

I have wealth; I am forbidden by the moſt ſolemn obligations to diſcover the ſource of that wealth. This only I may not communicate; in all things elſe govern me deſpotically! Shall I reſign it all? Shall I return to the cottage of the lake? Shall I go a houſeleſs and helpleſs wanderer, to the furtheſt quarter of the globe? Speak the word only, and it ſhall be done! I prefer your affection, your cordial regard, in the moſt obſcure and meaneſt retreat, to all that wealth can purchaſe, or kings can give!

Reginald, I thank you! I acknowledge in your preſent language and earneſtneſs the object of my firſt and only love. This return to your true character

racter gives me all the pleaſures I am now capable of receiving. But it is too late. My ſon is loſt; that cannot be retrieved. Your reputation is blaſted; I am ſorry you are returned hither; Conſtance is in arms againſt you, and I will not anſwer for the conſequence. For myſelf; I am grieved to tell you ſo; I am aſhamed of my weakneſs; but—my heart is broken! I loved you ſo entirely, that I was not able to bear any ſuſpenſion of our confidence. I had paſſed with you through all other misfortunes, and the firmneſs of my temper was not ſhaken. For this one misfortune, that ſeemed the entire diſſolution of our attachment, I was not prepared. I feel, every morning as I riſe, the warnings of my deceaſe. My nights are ſleepleſs; my appetite is gone from me.

Oh, Marguerite, talk not thus! Diſtract me not with the moſt fatal of images! Our confidence ſhall return; all the cauſes of your malady ſhall be removed! with the cauſes, the ſymptoms, depend on it! will diſappear. Your youth, your tranquillity, your happineſs, ſhall be renewed! Oh, no, you ſhall not die! We will yet live to love and peace!

Flatter not yourſelf with vain hopes, my love! I feel ſomething wrong within me, which is rapidly wearing my body to decay. Reconcile your mind to what very ſoon muſt happen! Prepare yourſelf for being the only parent to your remaining offspring! I have compoſed my ſpirit, and calmly wait my fate. You have now adminiſtered to me the only conſolation I aſpired to, by this return to your true character, which affords me a ſanguine hope that you will faithfully diſcharge the duty to your offspring, that, when I am gone, will be doubly urgent on you.

I was

I was grieved to ſee that the mind of Marguerite was ſo deeply impreſſed with the notion that ſhe had but a ſhort time to live. I could not bear to imagine for a moment that her prognoſtic was juſt. The thought ſeemed capable of driving me to diſtraction. I however conceived that the beſt thing that could be done for the preſent, was to turn the converſation to ſome other topic.

Well, well, my love! I anſwered. There are ſome things that are immediately preſſing. Direct me, direct a huſband, ſo amply convinced of your diſcretion, what I am to do at preſent! Shall I inſtantly annihitate all that has made this unfortunate breach between us; ſhall I reſign my wealth, from whatever ſource derived? Whither ſhall we go? Shall we return to the cottage of the lake? Shall we retreat into ſome diſtant part of the world?

How can you expect me, ſaid Marguerite faintly ſmiling, to adviſe you reſpecting the diſpoſal of a wealth of the amount of which I am uninformed, and the ſource of which is inviſible? But I gueſs your ſecret. The ſtranger who died your gueſt, was in poſſeſſion of the philoſopher's ſtone, and he has bequeathed to you his diſcovery. I have heard of this art, though I confeſs I was not much inclined to credit it. I do not aſk you to confirm my conjecture; I do not wiſh that you ſhould violate any engagements into which you have entered. But, upon putting circumſtances together, which I have been inevitably compelled to do, I apprehend it can be nothing elſe. I am aſtoniſhed that a conjecture ſo obvious, ſhould have offered itſelf to my mind ſo late.

If your wealth is of any other nature, ample as it apparently is, it is a natural queſtion to aſk, to whom is it to be reſigned? The ordinary wealth of the world is ſomething real and ſubſtantial,

ſtantial, and can neither be created nor diſſipated with a breath. But, if your wealth be of the kind I have named, let me aſk, is it poſſible to reſign it? A ſecret is a thing with which we may chooſe whether we will become acquainted; but, once known, we cannot become unacquainted with it at pleaſure. Your wealth, upon my ſuppoſition, will always be at your beck; and it is perhaps beyond the ſtrength of human nature to refuſe, under ſome circumſtances, at leaſt in ſome emergencies, to uſe the wealth that is within our reach.

It has been our mutual misfortune that ſuch an engine has been put into your hands. It has been your fault to make an indiſcreet uſe of it. Gladly would I return to the tranquil and unſuſpected poverty of the cottage of the lake. But that is impoſſible. You have loſt your ſon; you have loſt your honeſt fame; the life of your Marguerite is undermined and periſhing. If it were poſſible for us to return to our former ſituation and our former peace, ſtill, my Reginald! forgive me if I ſay, I doubt the inflexibleneſs of your reſolution. The gift of unbounded wealth, if you poſſeſs it, and, with wealth, apparently at leaſt, diſtinction and greatneſs, is too powerful a temptation. Nor, though I ſhould truſt your reſiſtance, could I be pleaſed with a huſband with the poſſeſſion of theſe extraordinary powers. It ſets too great a diſtance between the parties; it deſtroys that communion of ſpirit which is the ſoul of the marriage-tie. A conſort ſhould be a human being and an equal. But to this equality and ſimple humanity it is no longer in your power to return.

Circumſtanced then as we now are, the marriage union, you muſt allow me to ſay, irreparably diſſolved, your ſon loſt, your fair fame deſtroyed,

ſtroyed, your orphan daughters to be provided for, I know not that I ſhould adviſe you to forget the prerogative that has been bought for you at ſo dreadful a price. Beſide, if I am not miſtaken, there are great trials in reſerve for you. I am afraid your preſent ſituation is extremely critical. I am afraid the ſuſpicions you have excited againſt you, will coſt you dear. At all events I believe it to be but a neceſſary precaution that we ſhould fly from Conſtance. I have nothing therefore to recommend to you on the ſubject of wealth but diſcretion. I ſhall not long live to be your adviſer. I ſhall always regard the donation you have received, you cannot wonder that I ſhould ſo regard it, as one of the moſt fearful calamities to which a human being can be expoſed. If you had uſed your prerogative with diſcretion, you might perhaps, though I confeſs I do not ſee how, have eſcaped the obloquy of the world. Into your domeſtic ſcene, where the intereſt is more lively, and the watch upon you more unremitted, it muſt have introduced alienation and diſtruſt.—As it is, I ſee you ſurrounded with dangers of a thouſand denominations. Police has its eyes upon you; ſuperſtition will regard you as the familiar of demons; avarice will turn upon you a regard of jealouſy and inſatiable appetite. If I could recover from the weakneſs that at preſent beſets me, and continue to live, I foreſee more and ſeverer trials, both at home and abroad, than any I have yet ſuſtained; and I am almoſt thankful to that providence which has decreed to take me away from the evil to come.

One thing further let me add. I will ſpeak it, not in the character of a cenſor, but a friend. It muſt ever be right and uſeful that a man ſhould be undeceived in any erroneous eſtimate he may make

make of himſelf. I have loved you much; I found in you many good qualities; my imagination decorated you in the virtues that you had not; but you have removed the veil. An adept and an alchymiſt is a low character. When I married you, I ſuppoſed myſelf united to a nobleman, a knight and a ſoldier, a man who would have revolted with diſdain from every thing that was poor-ſpirited and baſe. I lived with you long and happily. I ſaw faults; I ſaw imbecilities.—I did not ſee them with indifference; but I endeavoured, and with a degree of ſucceſs, to forgive, and to forget them; they did not contaminate and corrupt the vitals of honour. At length you have completely reverſed the ſcene. For a ſoldier, you preſent me with a projector and a chymiſt, a cold-blooded mortal, raking in the aſhes of a crucible for a ſelfiſh and ſolitary advantage. Here is an end of all genuine dignity, and the trueſt generoſity of ſoul. You cannot be ingenuous; for all your dealings are ſecrecy and darkneſs. You cannot have a friend; for the mortal lives not that can ſympathiſe with your thoughts and emotions. A generous ſpirit, Reginald, delights to live upon equal terms with his aſſociates and fellows. He would diſdain, when offered to him, deciſive and clandeſtine advantages. Equality is the ſoul of all real and cordial ſociety. A man of rank indeed does not live upon equal terms with the whole of his ſpecies; but his heart alſo can exult; for he has his equals. How unhappy the wretch, the monſter rather let me ſay, that is without an equal; that looks through the world, and in the world cannot find a brother; that is endowed with attributes which no living being participates with him; and that is therefore cut off for ever from all cordiality

and

and confidence, can never unbend himſelf, but lives the ſolitary, joyleſs tenant of a priſon, whoſe materials are rubies and emeralds! How unhappy this wretch; how weak and ignoble the man that voluntarily accepts theſe laws of exiſtence!

In the advice of Marguerite I ſaw that ſound wiſdom and diſcernment, by which in all the periods of our connection ſhe had been ſo eminently characteriſed. With her views of the future, I was not diſpoſed to accord. I regarded them as obſcured and diſcoloured by the unfortunate ſtate of her health. I could not indeed refuſe to believe that the prerogative I had received had been the parent of much domeſtic unhappineſs. Willingly would I have reſigned all that I had derived from the ſtranger, to be replaced in the ſituation in which his pernicious legacies had found me. He had robbed me of my ſon; he had deſtroyed my domeſtic peace; he had undermined the tranquillity and health of the partner of my life. Theſe calamities preſſed with a heavy and intolerable weight at my heart. But if, as Marguerite affirmed, they were irretrievable, or if they could once be removed, and the domeſtic advantages I had heretofore enjoyed be reſtored, I was not diſpoſed to fear thoſe external miſchiefs which Marguerite ſo feelingly predicted. I could not believe that I ſhould have ſuch a league of foreign enemies to encounter, nor could I eaſily image to myſelf any external evils that it was not in the power of gold to remedy. Theſe conſiderations I urged to my beloved partner, and by enforcing them endeavoured to remove from her mind thoſe gloomy apprehenſions, from the prevalence of which I feared much injury to her health. There was another circumſtance I was

ied

led particularly to inſiſt on; I mean the nature of the ſecret intruſted to me.

I admire your diſcernment and ingenuity, Marguerite, ſaid I, in your conjecture reſpecting the ſource of my wealth. I admire your delicacy in not preſſing me to decide upon the truth of your conjecture. This only I muſt be permitted to ſay on that ſubject: It is a ſecret; and you will perceive that the ſame reaſons, whatever they are, which make that ſecret obligatory on me, require that it ſhould be reſpected by you. The ſame evils that my own indiſcretions may draw on me, I ſhall be equally expoſed to by any error or miſcalculation of yours. I have therefore moſt earneſtly and ſolemnly to intreat you, whatever misfortunes may hereafter befal me, in whatever perilous ſituation I may be involved, that you will never utter a ſyllable on this ſubject; and that, as I am the ſelected depoſitory of this ſecret, and alone know with certainty what is its nature, you will truſt our proſperity in this point to me.—Marguerite engaged to conduct herſelf as I deſired.

The night which ſucceeded this explanation, was particularly ſoothing and grateful to me. I was relieved from a great and oppreſſive burthen. I was conſcious of that particular ſpecies of pleaſure which ariſes from the reſolute diſcharge of an heroic duty. The peace I felt within, ſhed its gay and reviving beams upon all around me. Reconciled to myſelf; I was filled with ſanguine and agreeable viſions of the future. My mind obſtinately rejected all dark and hateful preſages. I had intruſted myſelf and the direction of my conduct, as far as it was poſſible for me to do ſo, to that better pilot, under whoſe guidance, if I had not avoided the rocks and quickſands of life, I had at leaſt eſcaped with little comparative injury. I felt

therefore

therefore as if my domeſtic enjoyments were reſtored, and the pleaſures of my better years were about to run over again their auſpicious career. Not ſo Marguerite. She was mild, gentle and ſoothing. Diſpleaſure and reſentment towards me were baniſhed from her mind. She endeavoured to conquer her melancholy, and to forget the wounds that had been ſo fatal to her hopes. But her endeavours were fruitleſs. A fixed dejection clung to her heart; nor could the generous ſweetneſs that pervaded her manners, hide from me entirely what was paſſing in her boſom.

During this interval we had talked over the plan of our future operations. Marguerite was exceedingly urgent with me to quit Conſtance; nor did I, though not impreſſed with her preſentiments, feel any reluctance to that change of ſcene, which, I believed, would materially contribute to the ſerenity of her mind and the reſtoration of her health. We determined on ſome of the cities of Italy as the next place of our reſidence, and fixed, if poſſible, to ſet out ſome time in the next day or the day after. The plan of proceeding to France, which had lately been a favourite with me, was a favourite no longer. That had been the project of chearful and wanton proſperity. It had for its object the re-eſtabliſhment of my family honours, and the elevation of my ſon. Now my ſon was loſt, my wife was oppreſſed with languor and diſeaſe, my houſe was overwhelmed with ſorrow; this was no time for wantonneſs and triumph. If I could ever hope to reſume the plans my frolic fancy had ſketched, an interval at leaſt of ſober hue muſt firſt be ſuffered to elapſe.

My mind at this time ſuſtained a revolution ſufficiently remarkable, but of which the urgency of events that immediately ſucceeded, prevented me

from

from our aſcertaining whether it would have proved temporary or permanent. When I firſt received the donation of a ſtranger, my thoughts, as I have already ſaid, were in a ſtate of enthuſiaſtic tranſport, and, amid the golden viſions in which my fancy revelled, I became in a conſiderable degree alienated from domeſtic ſentiments and pleaſures. If I ſtill loved my wife and children, it was the love of habit rather than ſympathy, more an anxiety for their proſperous ſucceſs in the world, than an earneſt craving for their preſence and intercourſe. This ſtate of intoxication and rapture had now ſubſided. The events of the few laſt weeks had ſobered my thoughts. Having loſt my ſon, and being threatened with the loſs of his mother, I was rouſed to a ſenſe of their value. The influx of wealth and ſupernatural gifts had grown familiar to my mind, and now only occupied the back-ground of the picture. I was once more a man, and I hoped to partake of the privileges and advantages of a man. The fate reſerved for theſe hopes will ſpeedily be ſeen.

Some readers will perhaps aſk me why, anxious as I was for the life of Marguerite, and viſible as was the decline of her health, I did not adminiſter to her of the elixir of immortality which was one of my peculiar endowments. Such readers I have only to remind, that the pivot upon which the hiſtory I am compoſing turns, is a myſtery. If they will not accept of my communication upon my own terms, they muſt lay aſide my book. I am engaged in relating the incidents of my life; I have no intention to furniſh the remoteſt hint reſpecting the ſcience of which I am the depoſitory. That ſcience affords abundant reaſons why the elixir in queſtion might not, or rather could not, be imbibed by any other than an adept.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

THE morning after my return to my family, as I ſat ſurrounded with my girls, and endeavouring to make myſelf their playmate and companion, certain officers of juſtice belonging to the ſupreme tribunal of the city, entered my apartment. They were ſent, as they informed me, to conduct me to priſon. My blood at this intelligence mounted into my face.

To priſon! cried I—wherefore?—what have I done?—I am no citizen of your ſtate. What is the charge againſt me? Lead me not to priſon: lead me to your chief magiſtrate!

You will be called up for examination, when his honour is at leiſure to hear you: in the mean time you muſt go to priſon.

Do thoſe that ſent you, know that I am a native and a gentleman of France? they will be made to repent this inſolence. Upon what pretence do they dare to act thus?

You will pleaſe not to talk of inſolence to us. If you do not demean yourſelf quietly,——

Silence, fellow! anſwered I fiercely. Lead the way!

By this time, the children, aſtoniſhed at a ſcene ſo alarming and unintelligible to them, began to expreſs their terror in various ways. Julia, who was ready to faint, occupied the attention of her mother. The little Marguerite clung round my knees, and expreſſed her emotions by ſhrieks and cries. To ſee her father about to be torn from her by four ſtrangers, the peculiarity of whoſe garb of office, aggravated the rudeneſs of their countenances and the peremptorineſs of their behaviour,

was

was a ſpectacle which the affectionateneſs of her nature was unable to endure.

I will go with you preſently, ſaid I to the officers. See, how you have terrified the children!

Nay, ſir, if you will behave civilly, and make it worth our while, we do not deſire to hurry you.

I was ſtung with the brutal aſſurance with which they thus ſet the liberty of a few moments at a price to me. But I checked my impatience. I felt that it would be both fooliſh and degrading to enter into contention with ſuch wretches. I turned from them proudly, and took my child in my arms.

I will not be long gone, my love! ſaid I. Theſe people have made a miſtake, and I ſhall ſoon be able to rectify it.

I fancy not, muttered one of them ſurlily.

They ſhall not take you away, papa; that they ſhall not! I will hold you and will not let you go!

You are a good girl, Marguerite! But I know beſt what is proper, and you muſt not think to controul me. The men will not do me any harm, child; they dare not. Perhaps I ſhall be back to dinner, and mamma will then tell me how good you have been.

As I ſpoke, ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly in my face; and then, flinging her arms round my neck, cried, Good bye, papa! and burſt into a flood of tears.

I embraced the other children and their mother, and, ſaying to the latter, ſignificantly, Fear nothing; you know I have nothing to fear!—departed with my conductors.

The way to the citadel lay through the market place. The ſcene was already crowded; and I had the mortification to be led along as a criminal in the midſt of a thouſand gazing eyes and enquiring tongues. New as every thing connected with

my preſent ſituation was to me, I had not anticipated this vexation till it arrived. I was filled with ſhame and impatience. To my dungeon! ſaid I to my conductors ſternly. If you had ſhown yourſelf better-humoured, cried the moſt brutal of them, we would have led you round by the back-way.

The maſter of the priſon was ſomewhat leſs a ſavage than his officers. He knew my perſon, and had heard of my wealth. Does monſieur chooſe the beſt apartment, ſaid he? Any where that I can be alone! anſwered I haſtily: He heſitated a moment. I looked in his face: Oh, yes, you will be paid! He bowed, and ſhowed me to a room. I ſhut the door as he retired. What had happened to me was of little importance in itſelf. The impertinence of bailiffs and thieftakers, is of no more real moment than the ſtinging of a gnat. But I was ſo utterly unacquainted with ſcenes of this nature! The pride of rank that ſwelled within me, made every appearance of conſtraint galling to my ſenſe. From the inſtant I was able to write man, no one, except in the voluntary compact of military ſervice, had ever ſaid to me, Go there! or, Do this! And now, was I to be directed by the very refuſe of the ſpecies? was I to learn the prudence of not replying to their inſults? was I to purchaſe at a ſtipulated price their patience and forbearance?—I requeſt the reader to pardon me for troubling him with my noviciate feelings: I ſoon learned to underſtand the world—the world of a priſon—better!

But, what was of more importance, I was apprehended as a criminal; I had been dragged a priſoner of juſtice through the ſtreets of Conſtance; I was, by and by, to be ſubjected to the interrogatories of the municipal tribunal. I could ſcarcely credit

credit my ſenſes, that ſuch an indignity had happened to the blood of St. Leon. It is true, I was innocent. I was conſcious, whatever might be my imprudencies and offences towards my own family, that I had done nothing to merit the animadverſion of public juſtice. But this was of no conſequence. Nothing in my opinion could wipe away the diſgrace of being interrogated, examined! of having for an inſtant imputed to me the poſſibility of being a criminal! I writhed under this diſhonour, and felt it as a ſeverer attack, than the queſtion, which was comparatively of ceremony and etiquette, that had oppreſſed me in my reſidence at Dreſden.

The next day, when I was brought up for examination, I had expected to be the complainant, in demanding redreſs for the injury I had ſuſtained. But I was miſtaken.

I entered the room haughtily, and with the air of a man that felt himſelf aggrieved. Of this however the magiſtrate took no notice. Do you know, ſir, ſaid I, that I am a citizen and a gentleman of France? Are you acquainted with the treatment I have experienced? Have you lent your authority to that treatment?

Wait a few minutes, replied he with an imperious tone, and I ſhall be at leiſure to attend to you.

I was ſilent. After the interval of nearly a quarter of an hour, he reſumed:

You call yourſelf the count de St. Leon?

I do.

Perhaps, ſir, you are uninformed of the purity with which juſtice is adminiſtered in the city within whoſe juriſdiction you now ſtand. Our ſtate is a ſmall one, and its magiſtrates are therefore enabled to diſcharge the office of a parent, not only

to

to its proper citizens, but to all ſtrangers that place themſelves under its protection.

I remember, ſir, that ſeven years ago, I and my wife and four children, ſick and unfriended, were upon the point of periſhing with hunger within the walls of this city!—The fact I mentioned was wholly foreign to the point with which I was at preſent concerned; but the parading arrogance of the man brought it forcibly to my memory, and wrung it from my lips.

Monſieur le comte, replied he, you are petulant. It is not the office of a ſtate to feed the ſouls it contains; it could not do that without making them ſlaves. Its proper concern is to maintain them in that ſecurity and freedom of action, which may beſt enable them to ſupport themſelves.

I ſuppreſſed the emotions which the tone of this ſpeech excited. I was unwilling to enter into contention with a man whom I regarded as inexpreſſibly my inferior.

Is it, cried I ſternly, a part of the juſtice you boaſt of, to drag a man of rank and a ſtranger from his home, without any intimation of the cauſe of his being ſo treated, and then, inſtead of inveſtigating immediately the charge alledged againſt him, to ſend him to priſon unheard? I diſdain to mention the behaviour of your officers: thoſe things naturally grow out of the abuſes practiſed by their ſuperiors.

The mode of our proceeding, replied he, depends upon the ſerioufneſs of the crime imputed. If a man of diſtinction labours under a ſlight accuſation only, we then treat him with all proper forbearance and reſpect. But, when he is ſuſpected of a crime of more than ordinary magnitude, that

alters the caſe. The man who has ceaſed to reſpect himſelf, muſt look for no reſpect from others.

I was for a moment thunderſtruck and ſpeechleſs. At length fiercely I cried, Produce my accuſers!

That is not the mode of proceeding in Conſtance. I have certain queſtions to propound to you. When you have anſwered them, we ſhall ſee what is to be done next.

Carry me before the prince-biſhop of your city! If I am to be examined further, let it be by your ſovereign!

The prince-biſhop, moved by the ſtate of our affairs in matters of religion, has been prevailed on to delegate his juridical authority. I am the perſon to whom the cognizance of your buſineſs belongs, and at certain times, aided by my aſſeſſors, have the power of life and death within this city. You have had every indulgence to which you are entitled, and it will be your wiſdom to be no further refractory.

Propoſe your queſtions!

A perſon, apparently greatly advanced in years, arrived in the autumn of the preceding year at an humble domain you at that time cultivated, called the cottage of the lake. It is to him that my queſtions will principally relate.

I ſtood aghaſt. The words of the magiſtrate were moſt unwelcome ſounds. I remembered that the ſtranger had ſaid to me, When I am once buried, ſpeak of me, and, if poſſible, think of me no more. I replied with eagerneſs and alarm:

Of that perſon I have nothing to ſay. Spare your queſtions; I have no anſwer to return you!

What was his name?

I know not.

His

His country?

I cannot inform you.

It is underſtood that he died, or in ſome manner diſappeared, while under your protection. Yet in the regiſters of the church there is no notice of that event. If he died, no application was made for the rites of religion to him dying, or to his body when his ſpirit had deſerted it. You are required to anſwer, what became of him or his remains?

I have already told you, that from me you will obtain no information.

One queſtion more, ſir. Seven years ago, you tell me, you and your family were periſhing with hunger. Soon after, you removed from obſcure lodgings in this city to the cottage of the lake, and ſeemed to be laudably employed in earning your ſubſiſtance with the labour of your hands. But within the laſt ſix months the ſcene is wholly changed. You appear to have ſuddenly grown rich, and here, and in other parts of Germany, have actually diſburſed conſiderable ſums. Whence comes this change?

The train of queſtions thus propoſed to me, impelled me to a ſerious reply.

Monſieur le juge, ſaid I, I am a ſtranger, a native of France, and a man of rank in my own country. I have paid your ſtate the compliment of chooſing it for my reſidence. I have expended my induſtry, I expend my wealth among you. I have comported myſelf as a peaceable inhabitant. No action of my life has brought ſcandal upon your ſtate, or diſturbed the peace and tranquillity of your affairs. I cannot collect from any thing you have ſaid, that I have any accuſer, or that any charge has been alledged againſt me. Till that happens, I cannot fall

under your animadverſion. I am a man of generous birth and honourable ſentiments. To myſelf and my own conſcience only am I accountable for my expenditure and my income. I diſdain to anſwer to any tribunal on earth an enquiry of this ſort. And now, ſir, in concluſion, what I demand of you is, firſt, my liberty, and ſecondly, an ample reparation for the interruption I have ſuſtained, and the inſults to which I have cauſeleſsly been expoſed.

You are miſtaken, ſir, ſaid the magiſtrate. What you mention may be the rule of adminiſtering juſtice in ſome ſtates. They may decide, if they think proper, that ſome open act, apparently of a criminal deſcription, muſt be alledged againſt a man, before he can become an object of animadverſion to the ſtate. But in Conſtance, as I have already told you, the government aſſumes to act the part of a parent to its ſubjects. I ſit here, not merely to inveſtigate and examine definitive acts, but as a *cenſor morum*; and I ſhould commit a breach of the oath of my office, if I did not lend a vigilant attention to the behaviour and conduct of every one within my juriſdiction. The city of Conſtance requires that nothing immoral, licentious, or of ſuſpicious character, ſhall be tranſacted within its walls. Your proceedings have eſcaped notice too long; much longer than they would have done but for your late abſence. In caſes where what is committed is merely immoral or licentious, we content ourſelves with ſending the offender out of our walls. But your caſe is of a very complicated nature. It has ſcandalized all the inhabitants of our virtuous and religious city. Unleſs you anſwer my enquiries, and give a very clear and ſatisfactory account of your wealth, I am bound to belive that there is ſomething in the buſineſs that will not bear

the light. The coincidence of times obliges me to connect the diſappearance of your gueſt, and the ſudden reverſe of your fortune, this connection gives riſe to the moſt alarming ſuſpicions. I have therefore to inform you that, unleſs you honourably clear up theſe ſuſpicions by the moſt ample communication, my duty directs me to remand you to priſon, and to aſſure you that you will not be liberated thence till you have ſatisfied the whole of my interrogatories.

Think deliberately, anſwered I, of your deciſion before you form it. Your priſons I deſpiſe; but I will not ſuffer my reputation and my honour to be trifled with. I came before you willingly, though I could eaſily have avoided doing ſo; becauſe I was eager to clear my fame. I expected accuſers, and I knew I could confound accuſation. But what is this that you call juſtice? You put together circumſtances in your own mind; you form conjectures; and then, without information, accuſer or oath, without the ſemblance of guilt, you condemn me to priſon, and expect to extort from me confeſſion. In defect of articles of charge I diſdain to anſwer; the only return a man of honour ſhould make to looſe conjectures and random calumnies, is ſilence. I am deſcended from a race of heroes, knights of the croſs, and champions of France; and their blood has not degenerated in my veins. I feel myſelf animated by the ſoul of honour, and incapable of crime. I know my innocence, and I reſt upon it with confidence. Your vulgar citizens, habituated to none but the groveling notions of traffic and barter, are not the peers of St. Leon, not able to comprehend the views and ſentiments by which he is guided.

You are mighty well-ſpoken, monſieur St. Leon, replied the magiſtrate, and your words are big and

ſounding

ſounding. But we know that the devil can aſſume the form of an angel, and that the moſt infamous and profligate character can pronounce with emphaſis ſentiments of the pureſt virtue. You are pleaſed to decide that the preſumptions againſt you are nothing but calumnies. Is it nothing that, having received a ſtranger and retained him with you for months, you endeavoured to conceal this fact, and never ſuffered him to be ſeen by a human creature? Is his final diſappearance nothing? Is it nothing that, ſuppoſing him to be dead, as he probably is, you denied to his remains the rites of funeral, and refuſe to tell what is become of the body? Is it nothing that, upon the death of this ſtranger, you, who were before in a ſtate almoſt of penury, ſuddenly appear to be poſſeſſed of unbounded riches? Where is the will of this ſtranger? In what archives have you depoſited the declaration of his wealth? Let me tell you, ſir, that theſe preſumptions, which you call nothing, form a body of circumſtantial evidence that, in many countries, would have led you to the ſcaffold as a murderer. But the laws of Conſtance, which you audaciouſly revile, are the mildeſt in the univerſe. Here we never put a man to death but on his own confeſſion. We ſimply condemn him to perpetual impriſonment, or until he makes a declaration of his guilt. You refuſe to declare the name or country of the man whom you are ſuſpected of murdering, and then have the aſſurance to boaſt that no private accuſer riſes againſt you. No, ſir, we know there can be no private accuſer, where the connections of the party can be ſucceſsfully concealed. But ſhall this concealment, which is an aggravation of the murder, prove its ſecurity? In concluſion, you boaſt of your blood and heroic ſentiments,

timents, and rail at our citizens as ſhopkeepers and merchants. Let me tell you, ſir, ſhopkeepers and merchants though we are, we ſhould ſcorn to conduct ourſelves in the obſcure and ſuſpicious manner that you have done. And, now I have taken the trouble to refute your flimſy pretences, which it was wholly unneceſſary for me to do, I have done with you. You know your deſtination, unleſs you are prepared immediately to give a ſatisfactory account of yourſelf and your proceedings.

Finding it impoſſible to make on this man the impreſſion I deſired, I declined entering into further parley; and telling him that I ſhould convey a repreſentation of my caſe to my native ſovereign, and did not doubt ſoon to make him feel the raſhneſs of his proceeding, I withdrew, in the cuſtody of the officers who had conducted me to the ſcene of audience. I was, I confeſs, ſtruck with the coincidence of circumſtances, which the magiſtrate had placed in a light equally unexpected and forcible, and which I now ſaw calculated to expoſe me to the moſt injurious ſuſpicions. I was not diſpoſed in the ſmalleſt degree to yield to the attack, but I felt a deſire to act deliberately and with caution. The whole of what I had heard was utterly unforeſeen, and it was with peculiar anguiſh that I became aware of this new conſequence of the ſtranger's pernicious donation. This was a conſequence that no reſignation, no abjuration of his bequeſts could cure; and that muſt be ſtood up to with manly courage, if any hope were entertained of averting it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

THE appearance of wealth that accompanied me had by this time made its impreſſion upon my keepers; and one of them now informed me, that monſieur Monluc, an agent of the court of France, who was making a tour of ſeveral of the German ſtates by order of his ſovereign, had arrived the night before at the city of Conſtance. There was no repreſentative of my country regularly reſident here, and I immediately felt the preſence of Monluc to be the moſt fortunate event that could have occurred for effecting my honourable deliverance. Selfiſhneſs and avarice, it may be thought, would rather have impelled the perſons who had me in cuſtody, to conceal from me a circumſtance calculated to deprive them of an advantageous prey. But in thoſe groveling ſouls from whom riches never fail to extort homage, however ſtrange it may ſeem, the homage often appears diſintereſted. They pay it by a ſort of irreſiſtible inſtinct; and, admiring what they covet, at an awful diſtance, with difficulty aſſume the courage to pollute their worſhip with ideas of calculation and gain.

I immediately addreſſed a memorial to this gallant ſoldier, with whoſe perſon indeed I was unacquainted, but the fame of whoſe ſpirit and enterpriſe had not failed to have reached me. I repreſented to him that I was a Frenchman of family and diſtinction; that I had been ſeized upon and was retained in priſon by the magiſtrates here, without accuſer or the hope of a trial; that I had not been guilty of the ſhadow of a crime; and that I knew the benignity and courage of my ſovereign would never permit a ſubject of France to languiſh under calumny and oppreſſion in a foreign country.

country. I added, that he would do an acceptable ſervice to king Francis, to whom I had the honour to be known, by interfering in my favour; and therefore intreated him to obtain for me immediate juſtice and deliverance. Monluc returned me an anſwer by the bearer of my memorial, aſſuring me that he would loſe no time in enquiring into the merits of my caſe, and that I might depend upon receiving every aſſiſtance from him that a man of honour could deſire.

The warmth and frankneſs of this anſwer filled me with hope, for there was no deliverance from my preſent ſituation that I could contemplate with ſatisfaction, but ſuch a one as ſhould be accompanied with reparation and eclat. Three days however elapſed before I heard a ain from the French envoy. On the morning of the fourth he announced his intention of viſiting me; and, about an hour after, arrived at the priſon. His appearance was ſtriking. He was tall, ſlender and well made, with a freedom of carriage, not derived from the poliſh of courts, but which appeared to flow from the manlineſs and active energies of his mind. His hair and complexion were dark; the former, though he was ſtill young, rather ſcantily ſhaded a high and ample forehead. His features were expreſſive of the ſanguine and adult temper of his mind, and, though his eye was animated, his countenance, as he entered, ſtruck me as particularly ſolemn.

You are the count de St. Leon? ſaid he.

I am.

You ſent me a memorial a few days ago complaining of the tribunal of this city: I am afraid, ſir, I can do nothing for you.

My countenance fell as he ſpoke; I gaſped for breath. I had conceived a moſt favourable impreſ-

ſion of him as he entered, and my diſappointment was particularly cruel. I had ſaid in my heart, This is the very man to reſcue my injured fame.

I ſee, ſir, you are diſappointed, reſumed he. I have not given up the affair: if I had, this viſit, which I deſign as a mark of attention, would be an inſult. The moment I received your memorial, I paid the utmoſt regard to it. If the affair was as you repreſented it, I knew I could not do any thing more acceptable to my ſovereign than interfere in your behalf. I have ſpent the whole interval in inveſtigating the caſe. I have ſeen the magiſtrate who committed you; I have viſited the ſpot where your crime is alledged to have been perpetrated; I have had an interview with your wife.

Well, ſir, cried I, alarmed and impatient—well, ſir, and the reſult?

Appearances are uncommonly ſtrong againſt you: they can ſcarcely be ſtronger. But you have a right to be heard; it is for the ſake of diſcharging that laſt act of juſtice that you ſee me this morning.

Great God! exclaimed I, overwhelmed with chagrin, is it poſſible that my countryman, the man to whom I was proud and happy to appeal, the gallant Monlue, ſhould believe me a murderer? I ſwear by every thing that is ſacred, by the blood of him that died for me on the croſs, and by my eternal ſalvation, that I am as innocent as the child unborn!

I am glad to hear you expreſs yourſelf with this emphaſis and fervour. I cannot but ſay that to my own feelings it has great weight. But I muſt not ſuffer myſelf as a man, and ſtill leſs in the public capacity in which I ſtand, to be overcome and confounded by your aſſeverations. There is a con-

a connected and a moſt unfavourable ſtory againſt you: this it is incumbent on you to clear up.

And you ſay, you have ſeen my wife? I was diſtracted and overwhelmed by Monluc's way of putting the queſtion. I was divided between my anxiety to be juſtified, and the ſolemn myſtery of the affair to which his enquiries led; and I probably ſpoke thus from an unconſcious deſire to gain time.

Yes, that is another preſumption in your favour. Madame de St. Leon is perhaps the moſt ſtriking and extraordinary woman I ever ſaw. Of the huſband of ſuch a woman, eſpecially when he appeared to be the object of her attachment, I ſhould be always inclined to think well. Madame de St. Leon pleaded for you with earneſtneſs and affection. But, amidſt all her ardour, I could perceive that ſhe felt there was ſomething myſterious and unpleaſant in the affair, that ſhe was herſelf unable to develop.

As Monluc ſpoke, I ſaw that I had failed in one of the main anchors of my hope. I thought that no one could have talked with my beloved Marguerite, and have left her with the opinion that I was a murderer. How did this happen? Was ſhe lukewarm and unfaithful in my vindication?

What ſhe, continued my countryman, I could ſee was not only unable to explain, but did not fully underſtand, it is you alone can clear; the concealment of the ſtranger, his diſappearance, what became of the body, and your own ſudden tranſition from poverty to wealth.

I was by this time fully ſenſible of the nature of my ſituation. I ſummoned my fortitude; I felt that I had no longer any hope but in the dignity of innocence.

You

You call on me for explanation, replied I. Can you not conceive, gallant Monluc, that I may be able to reſolve your doubts, and yet that I will not? Explanation is not the buſineſs of a man of honour. He cannot ſtoop to it. He will win the applauſe and approbation of mankind, if won, in ſilence. He will hold on the even courſe of a generous ſpirit, and turn neither to the right nor the left, to court the ſuffrage, or deprecate the condemnation of a giddy multitude. Such, my brave countryman, have been the maxims of my paſt life; ſuch will be the maxims of my future.

I admire, anſwered Monluc, at leaſt the gallantry of theſe ſentiments, though I may be inclined to doubt their prudence. But, if ſuch is your determination, permit me to ſay, you have no concern with me. He who reſolutely withholds explanation, muſt arm himſelf with patience, and either wait the operation of time, or reſt ſatisfied with the conſciouſneſs of his innocence.

And is that all? Will there not be ſome noble ſpirits, who, ſeparating themſelves from the herd, will judge of him by what they feel in their own breaſts, and be drawn to him with an irreſiſtible impulſe? Was it not natural that I ſhould expect Monluc to be one of theſe? It would be hard indeed, if he who diſdains to temporiſe with popularity, and to vindicate himſelf from the ungenerous conſtructions of ſordid minds, ſhould not by that very proceeding ſecure the friendſhip and ſympathy of thoſe whoſe friendſhip it will be moſt grateful to him to poſſeſs.

The friends of an innocent man, whom a combination of circumſtances has expoſed to the moſt painful ſuſpicions, muſt always be few. He can ſcarcely expect the acquittal and ſympathy of a ſtranger.

ſtranger. I muſt know, I muſt have felt and obſerved in a man a thouſand virtues, before I can be entitled to treat accumulated preſumptions againſt him as nothing.

And thus then are to end my hopes in Monluc? He does not feel that I am innocent? He does not recogniſe in me the countenance, the voice, the turn of thought, of a brother, a man no leſs incapable than himſelf of every thing diſgraceful and ignominious? Be it ſo! I will, as you adviſe me, reſt upon the conſciouſneſs of my innocence. A Frenchman, the deſcendant of illuſtrious anceſtors, long an exile, long the victim of adverſity, but at all times conſcious of the purity of my ſentiments and the integrity of my conduct, I will not ſuffer myſelf to be overwhelmed with this laſt deſertion, this ultimate refuſal of juſtice!

Count de St. Leon! your appeal is full of energy. In whatever way I decide, it will leave an unpleaſant ſenſation in my breaſt. Let us ſuppoſe that, as a private man, I could take you to my arms, and diſmiſs every unfavourable appearance from my mind. You muſt remember, that I am here as a public character, and that only as a public character am I capable of affording you aſſiſtance. Thus ſituated, I am bound to reſiſt the impulſes of a romantic and irregular confidence, and to do nothing of which I ſhall not be able to render a clear and intelligible account.

Let us not part thus! It is not the vindication of your character to the world, with which we are at preſent concerned. It is only neceſſary that you ſhould furniſh a ſufficient ground to juſtify me to myſelf for interfering in your behalf. Explain to me the particulars of your caſe, in confidence if you will, but fully and without reſerve. I will

not

not abuſe your confidence. I will make no uſe of your communication, but ſuch as you ſhall yourſelf approve. Only enable me to have a reaſon for acting, that is not merely capable of being felt, but that, I may know, is in its own nature capable of being ſtated to another. It is upon me that you call to take certain meaſures; you muſt enable me to judge of their propriety.

You are miſtaken when you ſuppoſe the appearances againſt you to be ſlight. It is not a ſlight circumſtance, that you profeſs to be ignorant of, or have refuſed to diſcloſe, the country, the connections, and even the name of the ſtranger whom you ſo anxiouſly concealed. The diſappearance of his body is ſtill more extraordinary. What intelligible motive, except a guilty one, can I aſſign for that? But your ſudden wealth immediately after this diſappearance, is eſpecially material. It is a broad and glaring fact, that men cannot ſhut their eyes on, if they would. The chain and combination of events, that proceeds ſyſtematically from link to link, is the criterion of guilt and the protector of reputation. Your caſe, as it now ſtands, is ſcarcely to be termed equivocal; upon the ſuppoſition of your criminality all is plain and eaſy to be accounted for; upon any other ſuppoſition it appears an inſcrutable myſtery. Place but the balance even; preſent to me an expoſition of theſe facts, that ſhall make your innocence not leſs probable than your guilt; and, as I feel myſelf intereſted for you and your family, and as the preſumption, when matters are doubtful, ought always to be on the favourable ſide, I conſent to be your friend?

How unfortunate, I exclaimed, am I doomed to be? Your propoſal is liberal and generous; but I muſt refuſe it! My ſtory is an unhappy

one;

one; particulars have been repoſed in my fidelity which I am not at liberty to communicate, but which, if communicated, you would not regard as diſhonourable. I may be made the martyr of infamy, and the abhorrence of my ſpecies; I can endure adverſity and anguiſh; I can die; but that which you demand from me, never can be confided to any mortal ear!

As you pleaſe, rejoined Monluc. The ſecrets of a dead man, to be preſerved after his death, and that to the ruin of him who is their depoſitory, muſt, I believe, be villainous ſecrets; and the ſecret of a villain no one is bound to obſerve. You muſt further give me leave to tell you, that, whatever a high-ſtrained ſenſe of honour might dictate in that point, the fortune you poſſeſs is your own affair, and to diſſipate or not the myſtery which hangs upon that, is wholly at your diſcretion. But I have already advanced as far, perhaps further than circumſtances or propriety could juſtify, and there can now be no more parley between us.

Monluc, cried I, I ſubmit! However harſh your deciſion is as towards me, however painful and unfortunate its conſequences, I will admit it to be that which duty preſcribes to you. I ſtruggle, I contend, no further. One thing only I would willingly obtain of you, that you would interpoſe your influence to obtain for me the ſociety and intercourſe of my family. The tranſaction of this day will then be remembered by me with reſpect towards you, and a melancholy regret that I could not entitle myſelf to your eſteem. I ſhall recollect with pleaſure that I owe ſomething to the generoſity of Monluc.

Incredible pertinacity! exclaimed my viſitor with a voice of perplexity and aſtoniſhment. What,

am I to conceive of you? Under what appearance ſhall I conſider you in the records of my memory? Your ſilence is the indication of guilt, and in that indication I ought to acquieſce. Yet the fortitude of your manner, and ſomething, I know not what, of emotion, that your manner produces in my own boſom, would fain perſuade me that you are innocent. Why will you leave me a prey to this contention of thought? If all men conſtituted as I am, were to feel in you as it were, the magnetiſm of innocence, ſhame, the ſimple inference of underſtanding, and the general ſenſe of mankind, would oblige them to treat you as guilty. What I can however, be aſſured I will chearfully do for you. I cannot deliver you from priſon, but I will not fail to obtain the mitigation you aſk. Farewell!

Such was the iſſue of my interview with Monluc. It was clear that my reputation was wounded beyond the power of remedy. While the queſtion had only been of a magiſtrate; haughty, ſupercilious, inſolent and unfeeling, I flattered myſelf that the harſhneſs of the concluſions that were drawn, might be wholly aſcribed to the depravity of his character. But Monluc was the reverſe of this man. He was not leſs generous and heroic, than the magiſtrate was groſs and illiberal. His deſire to relieve me was not leſs apparent, than the magiſtrate's eagerneſs to oppreſs. Yet his concluſion was the ſame, and was felt by me ſo much the more bitterly, in proportion to the humanity, the kindneſs, the intrepidity and the virtue of the man from whom it flowed. Virtue and vice, barbariſm and refinement, were equally engaged in the concert againſt me, and there was no chance I ſhould triumph in a contention with ſo many enemies.

I might

I might now be ſaid to have reached the end of my adventure: I had cloſed one grand experiment upon the donation of the ſtranger. What had it produced to me? Not one atom of the benefits I anticipated; not a particle of thoſe advantages which a little while ago had made the intoxication of my waking dreams. Its fruits had been diſtaſteful and loathſome. Whether I looked to my perſon, my family or my fame, I had felt in all the miſerable effects of this treacherous and deluſive gift. My perſon was ſhut up in priſon; and I was now to make an experiment whether, by clandeſtine and ſecret proceedings, wealth could reſtore to me the liberty of which wealth had deprived me. My family was blaſted: my wife was ſtruck to the heart, and no mortal ſkill could reſtore the wound ſhe had ſuffered; my ſon was gone unaided into voluntary exile, that he might ſhun the contagion of my follies; what was I to do with the poor remains of my houſe, forlorn, dejected and wretched? The wound my good-name had received, was of the moſt deciſive ſpecies. When I firſt encountered contumely at Dreſden, and was called on for explanation by Coligny, the difficulties of my condition ſtruck anguiſh to my ſoul. But what were they, compared with what had now overtaken me? I was charged with robbery and murder, with every thing that combines the whole ſpecies againſt the perpetrator, and reſolves them without ſenſe of compunction to extirpate him from the face of the earth. Perhaps it was only by the courteſy of the laws of this ſtate, that I was permitted my choice between an ignominous death and perpetual impriſonment. I might poſſibly indeed eſcape from my confinement; I might paſs into a diſtant country; I might be fortunate enough to cut off all connection between my paſt and my future life,

and

and thus enter upon a new career. But this to a man of honourable mind is a miſerable expedient. With what feelings does he recollect, that there is a ſpot where his name is abhorred, where a ſtory is told againſt him to excite the wonder of the ignorant and the torpid feelings of the ſluggiſh ſoul, a ſtory to darken with new infamy the records of guilt, and to infect the imagination of the ſolitary man with nameleſs horrors? To be the theme of ſuch a tale, is no common evil. No matter how far the man to whom it relates, ſhall remove from the deteſted ſpot; the ſpot itſelf with all its chain of circumſtances, will often recur; the voices that repulſed and humbled him, will ring in his ear; the degraded figure he made, will riſe for ever freſh to his imagination. He cannot aſcend to any free and lofty ſentiment; he cannot attain to the healthful tone of unblemiſhed virtue; wherever he goes, he carries the arrow of diſgrace in his boſom, and, whenever he would erect his head on high, it reminds him of the paſt, and ſtings him to the heart.

If the conſciouſneſs of all this would have been painful to any other man, what was it to me, who had been brought up from my infancy in the opinion that fame was the firſt of all human poſſeſſions, and to whom honour and an unimpeached integrity had ever been more neceſſary than my daily food, or than the life which that food ſupported? What would I not have given, could I but have returned to the ſituation in which the inauſpicious arrival of the ſtranger had found me? But that was impoſſible. If all that I had recently paſſed through could but have proved a dream, if I could have awaked and freed myſelf from the phantoms of this horrible viſion, how happy beyond all names of happineſs ſhould I by ſuch an event have been made? What a leſſon would it have taught me of the emptineſs

and

and futility of human wiſhes? What a ſovereign contempt would it have impreſſed upon me for wealth and all its train of oſtentation? How profound a feeling of contentment with humble circumſtances and a narrow ſtation would it have produced in my mind? Alas, the conception of thoſe advantages and that peace was the illuſion, and not the evils I had ſuſtained, and from which I could not eſcape!

L

CHAP. XXII.

MEANWHILE it was neceſſary that I ſhould make the beſt of the preſent circumſtances. My heart was wounded; my ſpirit was in a manner broken; but not ſo utterly withered and deſtroyed, as to make me reſt ſupine in perpetual impriſonment. I felt with equal conviction and pungency that my character and my happineſs had ſuſtained the deepeſt injuries; but I felt it incumbent on me to collect and improve the fragments that remained. For ſome days indeed after the conference with Monluc, I was ſunk in the deepeſt dejection. But, as that dejection ſubſided, I began to turn a ſteady attention upon the future. I recollected that an eternal and inexhauſtible gift deſerved to be made the ſubject of more than one experiment, before a deciſion was formed upon its merits. I ſhall become wiſer, ſaid I, as I go forward. Experience, however bitter, will teach me ſagacity and diſcrimination. My next experiment ſhall be made with more prudence and a ſoberer gradation. I will remove to ſome diſtant country, where the diſadvantages of my paſt adventures ſhall not follow me. I will take a new

name.

name. I ſhall then enjoy the benefit of a tyro juſt entering a ſcene, to all the perſonages of which he is wholly unknown. I ſhall be like a ſerpent that has ſtripped its tarniſhed and wrinkled ſkin, and comes forth in all the gloſs and ſleekneſs of youth. Surely, in an unknown land, with the prejudice of wealth in my favour, and no prejudices againſt me, I ſhall know how to conduct myſelf ſo as to obtain honour and reſpect. It is impoſſible that inexhauſtible wealth and immortal youth, gifts ſo earneſtly coveted by every creature that lives, gifts which if I were known to poſſeſs, my whole ſpecies, from the mere impulſes of envy, would probably combine to murder me, as not able to endure the ſight of one of themſelves ſo elevated above his brethren,—it is impoſſible that ſuch gifts ſhould not be pregnant with variety of joy.

Marguerite had greatly contributed to raiſe me from the dejection into which my impriſonment and the conference of Monluc had ſunk me. She was my better genius. I had been ſo accuſtomed to receive conſolation from her lips in the moſt trying circumſtances, that now the very ſound of her voice was able to ſmooth my wrinkled brow, and calm my agitated ſpirit. I liſtened as to the ſound of an angelic lyre; I was all ear; I drank in the accents of her tongue; and, in the dear delight, my cares were huſhed, and my ſorrows at an end. She talked to me of her daughters, whom ſhe repreſented as about to have no protector but their father; ſhe urged me to watch over them, and to take ſuch ſteps as ſhould moſt conduce to their future virtue and happineſs; ſhe pointed out the practicability of eſcape, and recommended to me to fly to ſome diſtant country: the dreams of future proſperity from the gifts of

the

the ſtranger were not hers; they were all my own. It was inexpreſſibly affecting at this time to receive conſolation from her, who had no conſolation in her own breaſt, who had bid farewell to all the gay attractions of the world, and talked familiarly of her death as a thing certain to happen in no very long time. She had loſt the pureſt gratifications of the domeſtic ſcene; ſhe had loſt her ſon; her heart was broken: yet with her dying accents ſhe ſought to diſpel retroſpect and inſpire chearfulneſs in the breaſt of her huſband.

The reader may perhaps imagine that I was ſomething too ſanguine, when, ſurrounded with jailors and all the precautions of a priſon, I planned the nature and ſcene of my next reſidence exactly as if I had been a perſon at large. But I took it for granted that the power of money I poſſeſſed, would eaſily unlock to me the gates of my captivity. I believed that, upon the loweſt calculation, perſonal liberty was clearly included among the gifts of the ſtranger. Impreſſed with this opinion, I fixed upon a negro, a ſervant of the priſon, and who had the keys of my apartment, as the ſubject of my pecuniary experiment. The idea of applying to him had perhaps firſt occurred to me from the mere circumſtance of my ſeeing him more frequently than any other attendant of the priſon. When I thought further of the matter, I judged from the meanneſs of his rank and his apparent poverty, that I could not have choſen better. So far as related to the ſum to be paid, as the price of my liberty, it was indeed indifferent to me whether it were large or ſmall. I had however ſuffered ſo much from the inconſiderate laviſhing of wealth, that I had no inclination on the preſent occaſion to make oſtentation of more than was neceſſary. But, what was of moſt

importance

importance to me, I was desirous that my first experiment should be a successful one. Though not unaware of the power of Gold, I conceived that, among persons of middling rank and easier circumstances, there might be varieties of disposition, and I might be mistaken in my choice.—Some might have the whim of integrity, or might place a sturdy sort of pride in shewing that they were content with what they had, and were too high for a bribe. There might be persons who, though of a plebeian rank, might value reputation as much as ever I had done, and be of opinion that no advance of station could compensate for the name or the consciousness of dishonour.—These distinctions may seem an idle and superfluous refinement, when it is considered that I had the power of raising my bribe to the level of any man's honesty or pride, be it as great as it might; and it may be thought that my offer might be so increased, as to be too dazzling for any mortal firmness to resist. Be that as it will, I am merely stating the reflections that passed through my mind, not entering into their vindication.

Taking the first opportunity then of accosting this man when he was alone with me, I addressed him thus:

My good friend, are not you poor?

Yes, sir.

Would not you readily do me a kindness?

If my master give me leave, I will.

You mistake me. Would you be my friend?

I do not know what you mean, sir. I have been used to call the man I love, my friend. If you mean that, you know I cannot choose whether I will be a man's friend; it comes of itself.

Can I not make you my friend?

That is, make me love you?

I was

I was ſurpiſed at the propriety of his anſwers. I am unable at this diſtance of time to recal the defects of his language; and I diſdain the mimic toil of inventing a jargon for him ſuitable to the lowneſs of his condition: the ſenſe of what he ſaid I faithfully report. I had before been ſtruck with a certain correctneſs of thinking in him; but I now examined his countenance more attentively than I had ever before done, and thought I could diſtinctly trace in it the indications of a ſound underſtanding and an excellent heart.

I do not know, ſir, continued he. If I ſee that you are a good man, I believe I ſhall love you. But if it happened that you were good and generous to me, I am ſure I ſhould love you very much.

You are very poor?

So they tell me. I never had more than a ſhilling or two at a time in my life.

It is a very ſad thing to be poor?

Why, yes, ſo I have heard, ſir. But, for my own part, I am always merry and gay.

My good fellow, I will make you rich.

Thank you, ſir! But what good will that do me?

You are a ſervant: I will make you a maſter of ſervants.

Now, that I ſhould not like at all. I am merry, becauſe I am light-hearted. If I had money, and property to take care of, and ſervants to direct, I am afraid they would make me grave and ſuſpicious, and in every reſpect unlike what you ſee me.

Is it poſſible you ſhould be pleaſed with your preſent ſituation, under the orders of one man in a houſe, and obliged to play the tyrant yourſelf to the reſt?

Why,

Why, as you ſay, ſir, there may be more agreeable ſituations than the life of a jail. But, as to being under orders, I have no objection to that. I never knew any other condition, and therefore I am contented. It is not pleaſant indeed to have a maſter who is always ſcolding and diſſatisfied; but the gentleman I ſerve at preſent is reaſonable; I know how to content him, and, when I have done that, he leaves me to pleaſe myſelf. You offer me money: now, ſir, that is not what I call being generous: I count nothing for much, except when a man ſhews me he has bowels, and convinces me that he thinks juſtice due even to a negro. I dare ſay however you deſigned it for generoſity, and expected ſomething from me in return. Tell me what it is you want, and whatever I can do with propriety, you may depend on it I will.

Do you approve of a man's being deprived of his liberty?

Will you pleaſe to tell me what you mean by liberty? You offered me juſt now what you called liberty and independence; and I am content to be a ſervant.

Would you be pleaſed, inſtead of being a turnkey, to have a key turned on yourſelf?

That I ſhould not. I underſtand the diſagreeableneſs of that well enough, for when I firſt entered this place, it was as a priſoner.

If then, my good fellow, you were convinced that I was a man diſpoſed to be generous to you in your own way, and to deſerve your attachment and love, ſurely you would not refuſe to deliver me from a ſituation which you have yourſelf felt to be ſo diſagreeable and calamitous.

I underſtand you now, ſir. I have already a maſter with whom I am ſatisfied, and I do not wiſh

wiſh to change my ſervice. When I was a priſoner, he found out that I was innocent; he got me cleared, and gave me employment. I am put here for the expreſs purpoſe of ſeeing the priſoners in ſafe cuſtody. That is the contract between me and my maſter. When I took the keys, by that action I pledged myſelf to be faithful to my truſt; and the nobleneſs of my maſter's behaviour to me in removing me from being a priſoner to be a free ſervant, is a double bond upon my fidelity. I would ſooner conſent to be torn limb from limb, than fail in what is expected from me. You may be generous to a harmleſs ſtranger; you have moſt reaſon to be generous to a man you love; but, if you would heap beneſits upon me merely becauſe I proved myſelf a villain, I can only ſay, it would be diſgraceful to be the object of your favour.

Thus ſaying, he quitted me, and withdrew from further parley. The converſation in which he had engaged, though I had had conſiderable experience in the world, was altogether new to me, and overwhelmed me with aſtoniſhment. I found in this trial, that the power of money was ſubject to limitations, of which previouſly I had not been in the ſlighteſt degree aware. I thought that nothing but the moſt extraordinary degree of reſolution and ſelf-denial could enable a man to reſiſt its enticements; and I had even been told, though I did not believe, that every man had his price, and a bribe capable of indefinite augmentation, muſt be in all caſes victorious. Yet here was a poor creature that was utterly exempt from its operation. He had no ſenſe of thoſe attractions, which ſo often degrade the beſt, and convert virtue into the moſt ſhameleſs profligacy. It coſt him no effort to be honeſt, and he uttered ſentiments that would have given luſtre to the moſt heroic character, without

any conſciouſneſs of their greatneſs. What I have ſeen, led me alſo to reflect on another ſingularity I diſcerned in him. In the midſt of the admirable, I had almoſt ſaid the ſublime integrity he diſcovered, (for it is not a criterion of the ſublime to be great without an effort?) he was deſtitute of knowledge, of intellectual cultivation, and all thoſe exquiſite ſenſations that moſt diſtinguiſh the man from the brute. He paſſed on quietly in the road of ordinary life, and thought not of the ambition to be wiſe or great, to be honoured by thouſands, or a benefactor to ages yet unborn. Kings might have confeſſed their inferiority to this man. But is he to be regarded as the model of what a human creature ſhould be wiſhed to be? Oh, no!

But the moſt memorable feeling impreſſed upon me by this converſation, was a conviction of what I had been backward to confeſs, that knaves were the perſons to whoſe aſſiſtance and concert I muſt look, and that I muſt be upon my guard againſt an honeſt man. No one was qualified to be my coadjutor, till he had proved himſelf unworthy of all juſt and honourable ſociety. The friend I muſt ſeek, was a man whoſe very ſoul melted at a bribe, whom money would ſeduce to perpetrate whatever his judgment moſt abhorred. Honour and integrity in the moſt refined and the rudeſt ſtate, Monluc and the negro both refuſed. It is impoſſible to conceive a ſenſation more painful and humiliating, than was this conviction to my mind.

I was not long left at leiſure for theſe reflections. In a few minutes the maſter of the priſon entered my apartment, and along with him the negro whom I had endeavoured to prevail on to aſſiſt in reſtoring me to liberty. The maſter began to reproach me in very harſh terms for attempting to ſeduce his ſervant from his duty, and aſked me,

what

what ſort of enjoyment or ſatisfaction a man could have in life, if he could not depend upon the people he put into his employment? To this I anſwered with ſterneſs, that I ſhould hold no debate about right or wrong with a jailor; that he might depend upon it that I would leave no ſtone unturned to ſet myſelf free, and what was more, that I would be free; and that, for his part, it was his buſineſs to keep me if he could, but not to inſult me, I therefore inſiſted upon his quitting the room.

And what uſe, replied the fellow, do you think now there is in putting yourſelf in a paſſion? If I have not a right to ſpeak to you, I know what I have a right to do, put you in the ſtrong room, and load you with irons.

I turned my back upon him. And how came you, ſaid I to the negro, to go and betray me? I ſhould have expected better things of you. If you refuſed to ſerve me, at leaſt you needed not have endeavoured to hurt me.

I did nothing but my duty, ſir. I have no wiſh to hurt you: but it is my buſineſs, not merely to take care of my maſter's intereſts myſelf, but to ſee that they are not injured by any body elſe. If he was not put on his gaurd, you might have been more ſucceſful with the next turnkey you endeavoured to bribe.

You will find it more your intereſt, monſieur, interpoſed the jailor, to talk to me than to my ſervant. You are determined to be free, you ſay. If that is the caſe, and it is to happen, who has ſo good a right to benefit by your reſolution as I have?

My eyes were opened in a moment. I ſaw that the knave whoſe rigour and ſternneſs could not hold out againſt the warmth of a bribe, the friend of whoſe aſſiſtance I was in want, ſtood before me.

I do not wonder, proceeded he, that you preferred applying to one of my ſervants. Their honeſty muſt be expected to be had at a cheaper market. But, for my part, I am determined that no man ſhall ever paſs theſe walls, without my being the richer. If then your eſcape is a thing that muſt happen, let us ſee what you can afford to give me for it.

Dear maſter, interpoſed the negro, you ſurely will not liſten to the gentleman's offer. When I refuſed to betray my truſt, it is impoſſible you ſhould conſent to betray yours!

Hold your tongue blockhead! ſaid the other. Do not you ſee that monſieur is determined to eſcape? I know he is rich. Though you have refuſed a bribe, I am ſure that all your fellows will not. The thing will happen ſooner or later in ſpite of every thing I can do; and there can be no harm in my helping to bring about, what it is impoſſible I ſhould prevent.

A morality like this ſeems exactly in its place in the breaſt of a jailor. We had already made ſome progreſs in adjuſting the terms of our contract, when the keeper of the priſon interpoſed.

But, monſieur, you will pleaſe to remark, that this is an affair that will be attended with difficulty. Whatever paſſes between you and me muſt be a ſecret. Your eſcape will be a thing open and notorious, and you muſt have a confederate, that I may not bear the blame of it. You muſt therefore take my black here along with you, that his flight may cauſe all the blame to fall upon him.

Oh, pray, maſter, ſaid the negro, do not part with me! I love you, and will do any thing in the world, if you will let me ſtay. You ſaved my life

life for aught I know, and made a man of me again; you cannot think what good it does me to ſerve a maſter that has been ſo kind to me!

Get you gone! replied his owner. You are of no uſe to me; you are not fit for a jail; you are ſo ſimple, I cannot tell what to do with you!

Indeed I do not like to go with this gentleman; it will break my heart. He ſaid, he would be generous and kind to me, if I turned a villain; I ſhall never be able, and ſhall never deſire to earn his kindneſs: but you rewarded me, becauſe I was innocent. He ſaid, he would make a maſter of me; and I am better as I am; I had much rather be a ſervant.

The difficulties of this poor fellow were ſoon ſilenced by the peremptorineſs of his maſter. The jailor told him that he would do him a great ſervice, by thus giving his maſter an opportunity of repreſenting him as the traitor; and with this conſideration, the negro dried his tears, and with a reluctant heart conſented to accompany me. Thus were his exemplary fidelity and affection rewarded! So little do ſome men ſeem capable of feeling the value of attachment! The character of the maſter was a ſingular one. The meanneſs and mercenarineſs of his ſpirit was unredeemed by a ſingle virtue. He was avarice perſonified. But he had found or imagined an intereſt in taking this negro, who had been wantonly thrown into priſon by a former tyrant, for his ſervant; and this the poor fellow, in the ſimplicity of his heart, had miſtaken for an act of exalted generoſity. His avarice had ſwallowed up all his other paſſions! and his ſervants had neither impatience nor inſolence to encounter from him: weighed therefore in the balance of the negro's experience, he appeared a miracle of mildneſs and benevolence.

Our bargain was at length concluded; and, the next time Marguerite came to visit me, I announced to her the success of my negociation. Before we parted, we sent for the jailor, and discussed with him the road I should take. My purpose was to pass into Italy; and Marguerite undertook by midnight to have every thing prepared to convey us to the foot of the mountains. This point being adjusted, the keeper of the prison left us; and, tenderly embracing Marguerite, I besought her to congratulate me upon the recovery of my liberty. She had heard however of the infamous nature of the charge against me, and, though she yielded it no credit, I could easily perceive that it rendered yet heavier the depression under which she laboured. She returned my embrace; the tears stole down her cheeks; but she was silent. I endeavoured to divert her thoughts and reanimate her spirits, by hinting at the new scenes before us and the distant country to which we were about to remove; but in vain. I will not reproach you, Reginald! said she; I will not desert my duty while I have power to perform it; you may depend upon my doing every thing I am able both for the children and yourself!

She left me in a very melancholy frame of mind. I had not expected to see her in this languid and disconsolate temper; and upon the eve of my liberation, I felt it like caprice. Incomparable woman! She was incapable of giving intentional pain: but, with her exquisitely susceptible mind, she was unable to support the dreadful reverse in which I had involved her, or even at times to assume the gestures of chearfulness and tranquillity; gestures that, at the best, but ill-disguised the grief within!

I was

I was buſily reflecting on what had juſt occured, when the keeper of the priſon reentered my apartment. I am come, monſieur, to take my leave of you. As I do not at all intend to loſe my place, it is not proper that I ſhould ſee you any more. You underſtand me?

Two days had already elapſed ſince the concluſion of our contract, and I provided myſelf for this and ſuch other demands as ſeemed likely to be immediately impending. I ſhould have preferred indeed to have delayed this payment till the moment of my departure: but what the jailor ſuggeſted appeared reaſonable; and I could not aſſign, even to my own mind, any cauſe why I ſhould be reluctant to comply with it. I paid to this wretch the price of his villainy.

I now began to count the hours, and eagerly anticipate the arrival of midnight. Though the moment of my liberty was ſo near, I yet contemplated with unſpeakable loathing the ſcene of my confinement, which was aſſociated with the deepeſt diſgrace and the blackeſt charges that are incident to a human creature. I felt as if, in proportion as I removed from the hated ſpot, I ſhould at leaſt ſhake off a part of the burthen that oppreſſed me, and grow comparatively young again.

Time was far from moving indeed with the rapidity my impatience required; but the hour of appointment at laſt was near, and I expected every moment the faithful negro to appear, and announce to me my freedom. The cathedral bell now ſounded twelve; I heard the noiſe of ſteps along the gallery; and preſently a key was applied to the door of my apartment. It opened; and three perſons, whom I knew for ſervants of the priſon, entered.

Come, ſir, ſaid one of them; you muſt follow me.

Where

Where is my friend the negro? ſaid I.

Aſk no queſtions; ſpeak never a word; but come!

It was ſtrange, that the maſter of the priſon, whoſe temper was ſo full of anxiety and caution, ſhould unneceſſarily truſt three of his people, who might eaſily have been kept ignorant of this hazardous ſecret! This circumſtance however did not ſtrike me at firſt ſo ſtrongly as it ought to have done. I had the utmoſt confidence in his fidelity to his profligate bargain, and expected every moment to meet the negro who was to be my guide. My conductors led me by a way which I ſoon perceived did not lead to the ordinary entrance of the priſon.

Where are you going? ſaid I.

Hold your tongue, or you will ſpoil all; replied one of them roughly.

I bethought me that there might be an objection to the diſmiſſing me by the public gate; I recollected to have heard that there were ſeveral ſubterranean outlets to the citadel; I judged from the words I had juſt heard that my conductors were acquainted with the plan that had been formed; and for all theſe reaſons I proceeded with tolerable eaſe and ſecurity. I was not much longer however permitted to doubt. I was conducted to one of the dungeons of the priſon, and told that there I was to remain. At firſt I remonſtrated loudly, and told them that I had been promiſed my liberty, and not a treatment like this.

We know that, ſir, replied they, and that is the reaſon you are brought here. It is our buſineſs to teach you that the greateſt offence that can be committed by a man in priſon, is to attempt to eſcape.

The

The ſhock and ſurpriſe that ſo unexpected an iſſue to my adventure produced, rendered me outrageous. I was no longer able to controul my fury; and, without knowing what I propoſed, I knocked down two of my attendants before they had an opportunity to ſecure me, and ruſhed up the flight of ſteps by which we had deſcended. The third however contrived to intercept me; and, while we ſtruggled, the other two came to his aſſiſtance. —They loaded me with fetters and chained me to the wall. I was then left in utter darkneſs.

I felt myſelf ſore with the bruiſes I had received in the conteſt; but what was infinitely worſe, I found the expectations of freedom I had ſo confidently entertained, baffled and diſappointed.—Marguerite and my children were at this moment waiting for me to join them. They would probably wait hour after hour in vain. To what cauſe would they attribute my failing of my appointment? To what cauſe was I myſelf to attribute my miſcarriage? My hopes in this inſtance had been in the utmoſt degree ſanguine; what was I to count upon for the future? Was money uſeleſs in every inſtance, in which mankind agreed to think its power unqueſtionable? What was the ſource of the preſent cataſtrophe and the harſh treatment I endured? Was the keeper of the priſon diſcovered, and diſmiſſed from his office? Had the negro gone, and given information againſt him? I formed a thouſand conjectures as to what might have happened: but I was unable to reſt in any.

I had remained about twelve hours in this ſituation, full of angry and diſconſolate thoughts, when the principal jailor entered my dungeon. I looked at him with aſtoniſhment; the clouds va-

niſhed

niſhed from my underſtanding, and I began to comprehend the real ſolution of the enigma.

Are you at large? cried I with indignation.—Why then am I here?

You are here by my orders.

Execrable villain! ſaid I. Did you not promiſe me my freedom? Have you not received the price of it? How dare you ſhow yourſelf in my preſence? As I ſpoke, I ſhook my chains, I clenched my fiſts, I trembled with reſentment and rage.

If you are not perfectly quiet and reaſonable, ſaid he, I ſhall leave you to your fate, and return no more.

Nothing is more ſingular in a ſtate of great mental effervescence than the rapidity with which our ideas ſucceed each other. At ſuch times we ſeem to think more in minutes than at other times in hours. I felt how miſerable a ſlave a man is, the moment he falls completely into the power of another. The wretch who ſtood before me was more vacant of human affections, than any one I ever ſaw. Yet I was his creature, to be moulded as he pleaſed. A thouſand injuries he could inflict upon me, for which neither the inſtitutions of ſociety, nor the extraordinary endowments I derived from the ſtranger, could afford a remedy. He might ſo torture my mind and baffle my wiſhes, as to kill in me every ſpark of lofty adventure and generous pride. My liberty might for aught I knew be for years at his diſpoſal. I felt however that my beſt courſe was to regard him with contempt, and uſe him as I would a ſpade or a file, to execute my purpoſes, without ſuffering him to waken my paſſions. I immediately grew more calm, and he perceived the revolution of my ſentiments.

You

You ſeem to wonder, continued he, that I did not keep my engagement with you? I pride myſelf upon being ſuperior to the prejudices, by which other men are frightened, like children with a bugbear. I have therefore no rule but my intereſt; and I did not ſee how my intereſt bound me to keep my engagement with you.

And what became of the counteſs?

I neither know nor care. I ſuppoſe ſhe ſtaid all night under the walls; I knew ſhe durſt not diſturb the priſon.

I felt I had ſtill emotions to ſuppreſs. I curbed my tongue, but they ſhewed themſelves in my eyes.

How do you intend to diſpoſe of me?

Keep you in cloſe cuſtody. I have got your thouſand pounds; the next thing for me to take care of is that I do not loſe my place.

And for what purpoſe do you come to me now?

Why to tell you a ſecret, I am not quite determined what conduct to purſue, and therefore I came here that I might have a better opportunity of judging.

Are you not afraid that I ſhould inform the government how you have cheated me?

You inform! Have I not got you under lock and key? I warrant you, I will take care of what goes out of theſe walls to the government.

The counteſs has a licence to viſit me.

What care I for that? I can keep her at bay as long as I will. She will not eaſily go to the government; and ſhe is not ſuch a fool as not to know, that to lodge a complaint againſt me, is not the way to procure the liberty of a man condemned to perpetual impriſonment. I can at any time trump up a ſtory of your attempting to corrupt the turnkeys, and be ſure, when I do, I will not want

for

for proofs. That will cover any thing I can do to annoy you, and anſwer any accuſation you can make againſt me. Do you think that the word of a jailor will not be taken, before that of the murderer he has in cuſtody?

I can bring your own ſervants as witneſſes, three of whom aſſaulted me laſt night.

Dunce, do you think I truſted them with my ſecret? They have nothing to tell, and apprehend nothing but a plot between you and my black, who has been put into the penitentiary for his offence. He is my only confidant; and I truſt him, becauſe his ſtupidity anſwers to me for his faith.

Suppoſe I were to double the bribe for which you ſold me me liberty, what ſecurity ſhould I have that you would abide by your bargain?

Oh, if you were to do that it would alter the caſe.

Might you not then detain the money, and defy me, as you have done now?

Suppoſe that a thing which might happen: can you help yourſelf? can you do better?

I ſaw there was no remedy, and I was conſtrained to allow the ſucceſs of this two-fold perfidy. It was with an ill grace and an attempt at ſullenneſs and indifference, that the jailor accepted my propoſal. The ſecond thouſand however had irreſiſtible charms; and, in ſpite of himſelf, the ſenſation that made his heart dance, relaxed his muſcles, and played about his mouth. He was puzzled what to think of me. The facility with which I produced the ſums he demanded, with leſs apparent effort than they might have come from a duke or ſovereign prince, ſtartled and ſtaggered him. He ſtill had his qualms, and evidently doubted whether he ſhould not raiſe his price a third time. I ſaw no ſafety but in pertinacity and firmneſs,

and

and had the good fortune ultimately to check his doubtful, half-formed experiments.

I was led by the accidents which have juſt been related, into further and deeper reflections on the power of money, as well as on the nature of the ſituation in which I found myſelf placed by the legacy of the ſtranger. My preſent experiment had been made upon a ſubject apparently the moſt favourable that could have been deviſed, upon a man whoſe breaſt the love of gold occupied without a rival: yet with this man I have very hardly ſucceeded. I was not indeed ſo blinded by the preſent dejection of my ſpirit and ſickneſs of my heart, as to imagine that I had not a ſecure game with this baſe-minded wretch, if I conſented to play it. I had only to enlarge my bribe, to change it from the limited ſum of two thouſand pounds to the more brilliant offer of two thouſand per annum, and no doubt I might have led him with me to the extremity of the globe. However he might have demurred, however he might have doubted, however curioſity, whetted even to agony by the goadings of avarice, might have prompted him to an inceſſant enquiry within himſelf as to the ſolution of my character and my powers, his graſping ſpirit would infallibly have chained his tongue, and been ſurety for his fidelity. But I could not yet prevail upon myſelf to endow ſuch groveling and noxious propenſities with ſo rich a reward. I conſidered, in the language of the ſtranger, that the talent I poſſeſſed was of the moſt momentous nature, and beſtowed by the governor of the univerſe for the higheſt purpoſes; and I ſhould have held myſelf unjuſtifiable in enriching by its means, however urgent the neceſſity might appear, the moſt worthleſs of mankind.

The ſentiments of my tyrant varied every hour; he was fickle, anxious, and undetermined; haraſſed with the double fear of loſing the ſum already obtained, and of not ſecuring the whole of what was capable of being acquired. He parted with me at laſt with all the pangs of a lover, who witneſſes the ceremony of his miſtreſs's taking the monaſtic veil, and being ſundered from him for ever. I was his Fortunatus's purſe, and this was the laſt day he was to enjoy the uſe of it; I was to him as the buried treaſure of ſome long-forgotten boarder, and he feared he ſhould quit his digging before he had carried off every thing that the field concealed. At length however he began to apprehend that he had urged the refinement of an unprincipled avarice as far as it would go; and therefore in a few days, the negro being already diſcharged from his penance, he ſuffered us to eſcape together.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.